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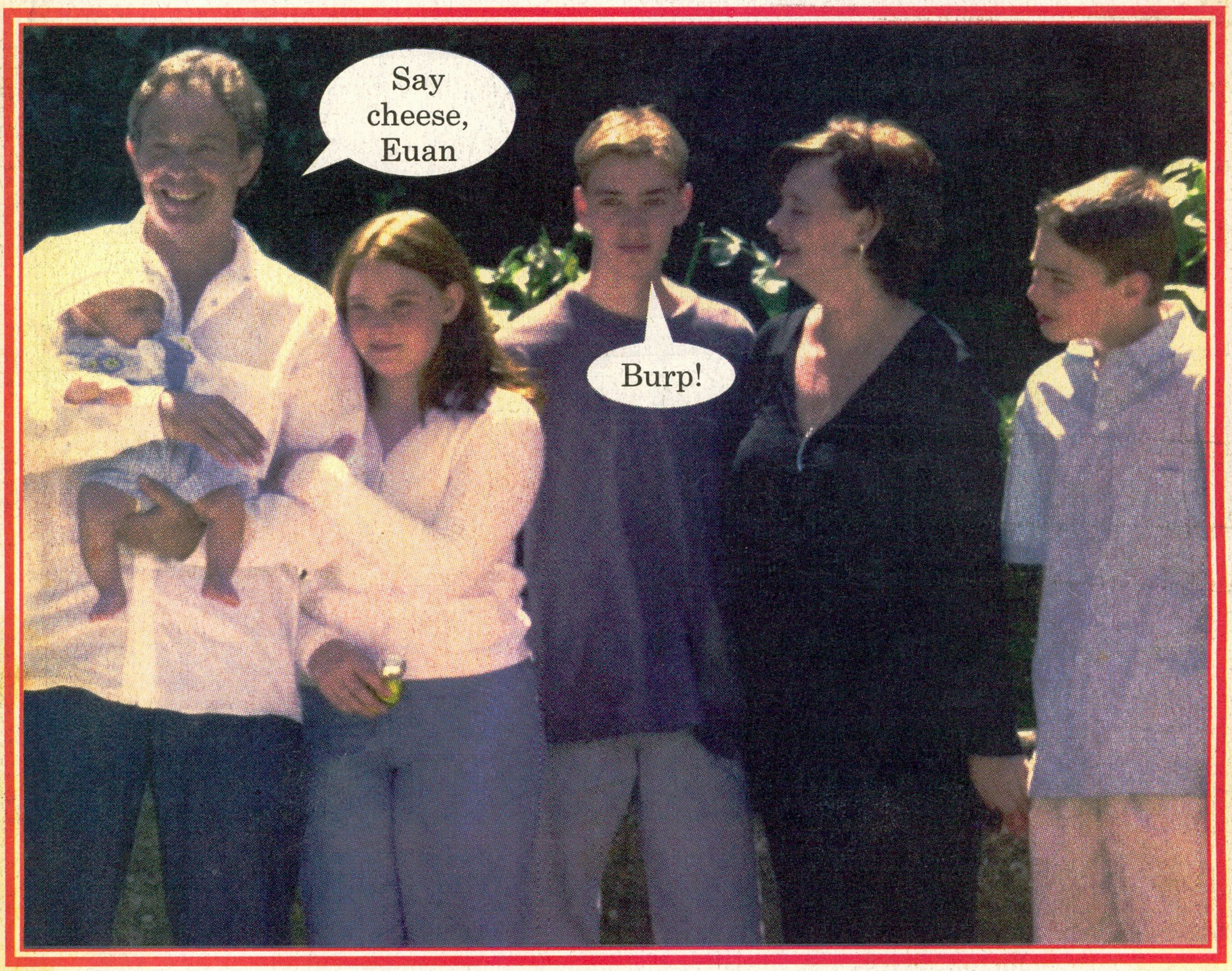

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Boost the British Economy.

The politicians and employers who opposed the introduction of the minimum wage just a few years ago, now openly accept it.

Their ominous forecasts of huge job losses have turned out to be false.

But the fact that they were so clearly wrong then has not deterred the very same people from issuing similarly dire warnings about raising the level of the present minimum wage.

Yet the truth is they are just as wrong now as they were before.

Experience has now shown what common sense has always suggested: that increasing the wages of low paid workers produces an increase in productivity that more than repays the investment.

And that a relatively modest increase in the national minimum wage to just £5 per hour will not only cover its cost but will show a handsome return to employers. It's not hard to see why.

It is just about impossible to make ends meet on £3.70 an hour. People who are required to do so bring a degree of anxiety and stress to work that inevitably affects their efficiency.

What's more they are far more likely to change jobs as they seek to improve their circumstances, which is costly to employers.

Not surprisingly, they frequently have more than one job, which also takes its toll on their effectiveness.

Many enlightened employers already know that their own interests are better served by paying a reasonable living wage. And they are reaping the benefits. But continuing resistance to a £5 minimum wage is still strong.

And it's not only the low paid who are the losers. It is the British economy as a whole.

For more information on the National Minimum Wage and other workplace issues, visit www.unison.org.uk, or to join us call 0800 5 97 97 50.

UNISON

Gnome

I HAVE been deeply shocked by the offensive manner in which certain newspapers have blown up a trivial and insignificant story out of all proportion.

The Russian navy has a right to privacy and what it gets up to at the bottom of the sea during the so-called "silly season" is surely its own affair.

It is sad that the media choose to harry poor Mr Putin when it should be focusing on more significant matters of international importance.

I am thinking in particular of Euan Blair's drunken binge and the question of whether Posh Spice's new record will go to Number One.

E. Strobes
pp. Lord Gnome
c/o Chateau Gratuité
Pays Rien
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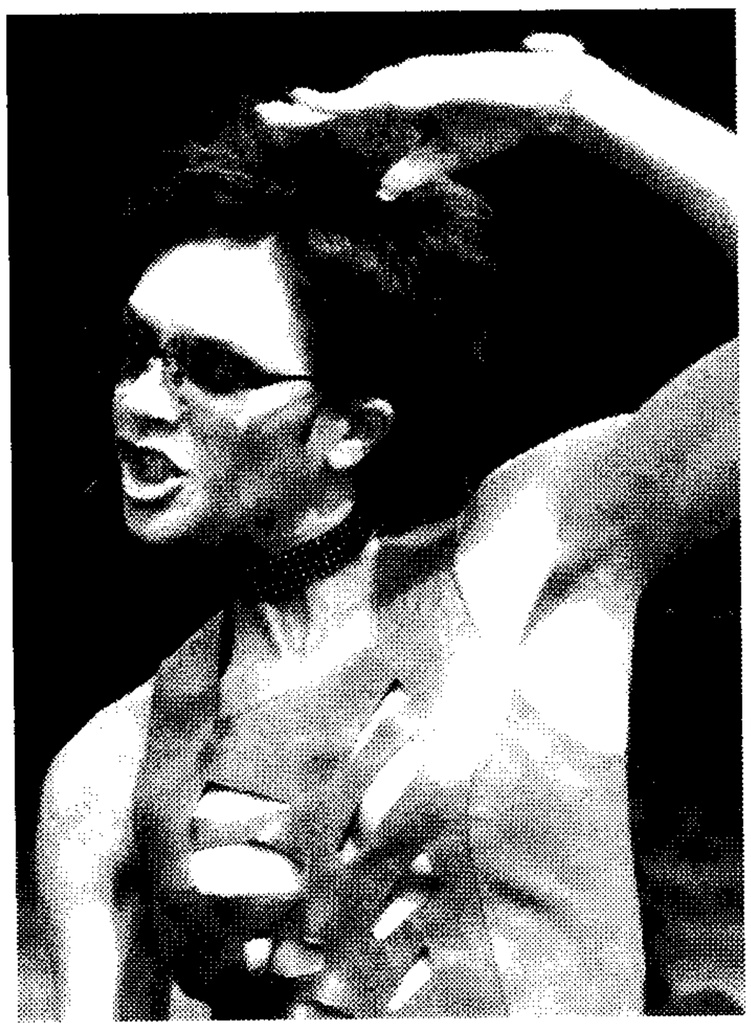

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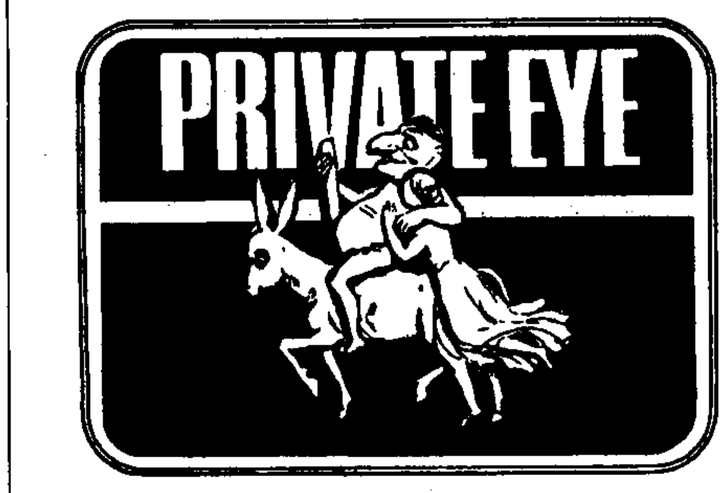

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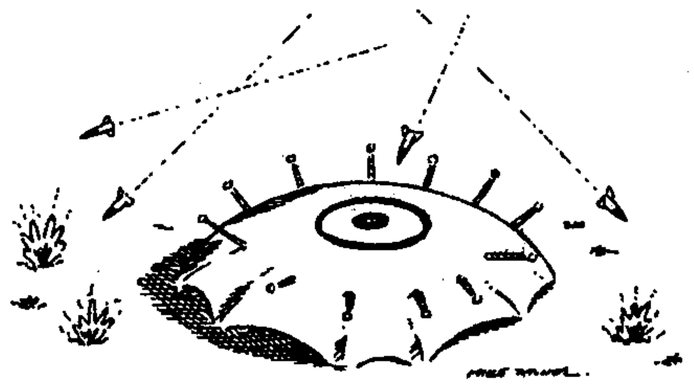

RAF Bombing Range Target

BUCKINGHAM PALACE'S old guard are enjoying a month without a spin doctor watching their every move. Simon Lewis, the first Blair-appointed royal spinner, has left the palace to return to his proper job with Centrica and replacement Simon Walker doesn't begin his secondment from British Airways until September.

Lewis was never held in high regard by the royals. Brenda used to entertain family dinner parties with her impressions of him and Philip called him "the meter reader". Still, he was a member of the royal household and a couple of days before his departure Lewis was received formally in farewell audience by the Queen.

He received the standard gilt-framed signed photo of Brenda and some gold cufflinks. Prince Philip, who would normally join Brenda in saying cheerio to a member of the household while dispensing a few snifters, remained locked in his study.

The last day in post was a non-event for Lewis. Brenda was in York having tea with the archbishop and few people turned-up for the farewell wine and nibbles do organised by Lewis's staff. Soon afterwards he packed his bag, handed in his pass and left. One hopes that as he left by the privy purse door he didn't hear the champagne corks popping from an open window above – where an alternative, more jolly, farewell party was in full swing.

IT WAS a story made for the *Daily Telegraph* and duly led the front page on 19 August: PARA IS PAID £40,000 FOR KEY EVIDENCE.

Here, it was suggested, was a paratrooper who had been a witness to the grim events in Derry in January 1972 when 13 unarmed demonstrators were shot dead by his colleagues. He was being paid huge sums of money to tell his story publicly to the Saville inquiry into Bloody Sunday.

The account was not exclusive to the *Telegraph*. Almost all the papers fulminated with the same shocking innuendo – that thousands of pounds of public money was being shelled out by the British state to pay for evidence hostile to the British army. The truth is rather less shocking.

The soldier in question was on duty in Derry on Bloody Sunday. He was traumatised by his experience that day, and almost at once wrote down a full account. Some time later, after leaving the army, he gave his notes to a friend. Nothing happened for many years, until the friend passed his notes to the *Irish Times*.

When the story appeared in *Irish Times*, the former soldier wrote anonymously to his local paper in England, confirming that he was the source. *Channel Four News* managed to find him and ran an interview in which he was heavily disguised.

Despite the disguise a rat-pack of hacks arrived at the former soldier's home. He managed to escape by the back door, but some time later his new home was invaded again. His landlord was mistaken for him, intimidated and roughed up. Terrified by these experiences, the former soldier fled his home again.

When the Saville inquiry was set up, prodigious efforts were made to find him. When he heard of these inquiries, the former soldier offered to give his evidence provided his safety and that of his two dependants could be assured.

This approach led to a deal in which the inquiry agreed to place the man and his dependants under what is normally known as a witness protection scheme. Under the normal terms of such a scheme the witness gives up his identity, his home and work, and is paid his living and travelling expenses.

So far, nothing had happened which would be out of the ordinary in an inquiry of this scope and potential danger for whistleblowers. It seemed obvious that the former soldier's circumstances, including especially the fact that he was being protected at public expense, would be kept secret until he had to give evidence.

Instead the full facts about his protection, down to the exact amounts he is being paid for his living expenses and even his motor car, were blithely revealed to the entire press by the inquiry's own counsel, Christopher Clarke QC. The result of the disclosure should be obvious even to Clarke and Saville. They put the prospective witness, even his life, in profound jeopardy.

Nor has his peace of mind been greatly assisted by another senior barrister at the inquiry, Edwin Glasgow QC, senior counsel to the ministry of defence. Presumably mistakenly, he blurted out the witness's name in an open session of the hearings.

FACT: The amounts shelled out by the taxpayer to senior counsel at the inquiry – like Edwin Glasgow QC and Christopher Clarke QC – would be enough to keep the unfortunate witness and his dependants in secure accommodation for the rest of their lives.

WHO is the David Kyte listed as one of the donors of more than £5,000 to the Labour party? Could it possibly be the David Kyte who founded stockbrokers Kyte Securities?

The other founder, Anthony Laiker, swiftly resigned from the firm after the *Mirror* share-dealing scandal broke. *Mirror* editor Piers Moron, who bought and sold so many shares through Laiker, insisted that all the deals were innocent. But Mr Laiker obviously can't have been so confident. He resigned "by mutual consent".

Intrigued by the notion that Labour is even partly funded by Moron's stockbroker, the *Eye* contacted Kyte and asked if he really was the Kyte on the Labour donors' list. His curious response was that he didn't remember. "I can't say yes or no," he insisted.

THE task of explaining away the fiasco of Norman Foster's wobbly bridge – which was given a grant of £7m by the millennium commission, only to be shut down within days of its opening – has inspired a magnificent feat of PR genius.

Here's how the disaster is reported in the latest issue of *Milestones*, the commission's newsletter: "In May, the Millennium Bridge was dedicated by Her Majesty the Queen... The stunning blade-of-light design has challenged conventional bridge construction, but the design is now being adapted to meet the enthusiastic public response."

- *Stagecoach sues passengers* 9
- *Why the Grauniad loves Big Brother* 10
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"Who's David Shayler?"

Street of Shame

NEWSPAPER readers with long memories may recall that long, long ago – well, back in March anyway – the tabloids were convinced that the greatest danger to the nation came not from paedophiles but from Romanian beggars, a sub-species of the dreaded "flood" of asylum-seekers.

So the *Mail on Sunday* sent hackette Lesley Saunders into the West End, dressed in shawl and headscarf, clutching a doll wrapped in a blanket, cup in hand to see how easy it was to fleece the unsuspecting British public.

After two-and-a-half hours "hustling and harassing", Saunders reported, she had collected £10.67 – "60p more than the minimum wage, without any tax or overheads". She reminded her readers, in good *Mail* style, that "some Eastern European beggars are also claiming benefits of £235 a fortnight and are given free housing". She concluded that a successful beggar needed "stubbornness… a hint of aggression… and an imploring manner".

The caper was brought to a halt, Saunders wrote, when an off-duty policeman hauled her off a Tube train. "When I explained who I was, his attitude changed – although I was still given a ticking-off by the British transport police."

If only that had been the end of the matter. Saunders has now been summonsed to appear on a begging charge at Horseferry Road magistrates court on 9 September. The *Mail*'s lawyers are frantically trying to get the charge dropped. After all, it is one thing to prosecute a poor foreign woman for begging in order to put food in the mouth of her baby – and quite another to try a middle-class British woman for begging in the noble cause of increasing the circulation of the *Mail on Sunday*.

HACKS working for Rupert Murdoch should be warned that exposing the potentially lethal activities of big business could earn them the sack rather than a Pulitzer prize or Emmy award.

For the last five weeks respected investigative journalists Jane Akre and Steve Wilson have been in court in Tampa, Florida, using whistle-blowing legislation to sue one of the Dirty Digger's many Fox TV stations, part of his News Corp empire.

The husband and wife team allege that they were fired for refusing to broadcast statements about Monsanto's bovine growth hormone, BGH, which they believed were not true. The huge pharmaceutical and agrochemical company just happens to be a major source of advertising revenue for Fox.

The couple had discovered that Florida dairymen were injecting cows with BGH. It boosts milk production but researchers suggest it might be linked to cancer.

BGH is banned in the UK, New Zealand, Canada and most of Europe. It is not banned in the US, but there are many there – in particular consumer and health groups – who are concerned about its use. Florida supermarkets, for example, had pledged not to buy milk from BGH herds. However, Akre and Wilson found shops had quietly reneged on the promise and that hormone-injected milk was on the shelves. They thought the public ought to be alerted to potential health risks.

Fox initially thought so too, buying up radio advertising time to publicise the documentary ahead of its scheduled broadcast in February 1997. Three years later it remains on the shelf and the couple out of a job.

Akre and Wilson allege that Fox bowed to high-level pressure from Monsanto (which of course denies any BGH-health risk) and pulled the programme. They cite in particular a letter from Monsanto to the head of Fox news in New York, which claimed the programme was inaccurate and said: "There is a lot at stake in what is going in Florida, not only for Monsanto, but also for Fox News and its owner."

The pair allege the station offered to buy out their employment contracts in exchange for their resignation and promise not to publish details of the story. When they refused they were asked to rewrite their script many, many times. They consistently declined to include information from Monsanto that hormone-injected milk was as safe as pure milk and eventually they were sacked.

Fox deny the allegations, saying the pair refused to abide by the company's preferred style of presenting both sides of the argument, without the critical analysis.

Despite the important implications for freedom of information and speech when big business is involved, the Tampa hearing has received little publicity either in the US or here. No doubt this is an oversight by the Murdoch media machine – but it's convenient for Monsanto nonetheless.

EVE POLLARD may be alarmed to learn that a former adversary of hers is behind one of the companies interested in rescuing her beleaguered magazine *Aura*.

Peter Miller, her former deputy editor at the *Sunday Mirror*, won a six-figure settlement after humiliating La Bollard at an industrial tribunal when she sacked him in 1992. He invested the money astutely in property and magazine ventures, and is now worth millions – unlike Eve, who is said to be £200,000 out of pocket following the collapse of her Parkhill Publishing outfit.

Some of Miller's friends say Pollard will be given her marching orders if his takeover succeeds. Others who know him better, however, insist that he would get far more pleasure from keeping her on and becoming her boss.

JUST FANCY THAT!

The *Grauniad* is fascinated, if a mite confused, by BBC TV's comely new wildlife presenter, Charlotte Uhlenbroek.

"Is this the new David Bellamy? See *G2*"
— page 1 puff (with picture), 16 Aug.

"Is this woman the new David Attenborough? Page 16"
— *G2* cover puff (with picture), 16 Aug.

"Charlotte Uhlenbroek… hailed as the new Charlie Dimmock…"
— Headline, *G2* page 16 (with picture), 16 Aug.

Council not liable over fatally locked widows

The Times

IF Rebekah Wade is worried that she has not generated enough publicity in her first few weeks editing the *News of the Screws*, she could do worse than repeat the promise of predecessor Phil Hall, made in the wake of the Lawrence Dallaglio affair, not to employ anyone who had used cocaine.

The latest exception to come to light is Leeds-based reporter Andy Germaine. When Hall made his pledge on RTE Radio news in June 1999, he was aware that at least one of his staff had been hired in full knowledge of a history of drug taking.

After completing a three-year course in journalism at Sheffield university and working stints on local newspapers in West Yorkshire, Germaine applied for a three-month trial as district reporter with the *Screws*. In his application he made it clear he had previous convictions for possession of cannabis and had had problems with harder drugs in the past. Hall was impressed, however, by the way Germaine had overcome poverty and addiction through a university education and playing for a local rugby team.

The three-month trial came to an end shortly after Hall's statement, but Germaine was kept on in full employment for more than a month and has worked as a freelance for the *Screws* ever since. As Germaine had only confessed to using cannabis and heroin and had not referred specifically to cocaine, it can only be concluded that Hall saw no conflict of interest.

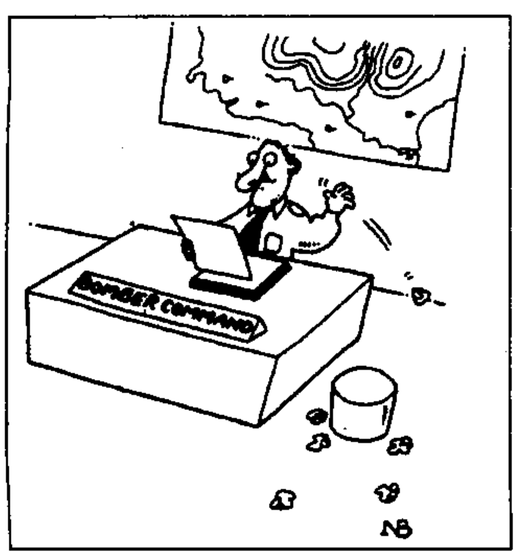
*"I'm a **paediatrician!**"*

THE *Express* letters page remains the premier forum for informed debate. On 11 August topics included whether Geri Halliwell should carry her dog or let it walk, and "Do we believe in crop circles?"

But there was still room for proper politics: for example, a letter from Mark Fenton of London headed "Ivan Massow has let down his constitutents". "I am astounded that yet again a Member of Parliament is permitted to change his party allegiance after being elected, thus making a mockery of our electoral system," stormed Mr Fenton. "Massow was not elected because he was a jolly nice chap, but because he stood as a representative of the Conservative Party!"

Er, in fact Massow, a mere Tory supporter, has never run for parliament, much less sat as an MP, facts which seems to have passed Mr Fenton by entirely – as well as the editorial staff at the *Express*.

GAGWATCH: Cartoonists' reaction to a report on inaccurate RAF bombing, from *The Times* (pp.1 & 16), *Guardian* and *Evening Standard*, 15/8/00.



LOONY TUNES

FAR-RIGHT luminaries are all the fashion in big business. Just as the *News of the World* made friends with National Democrat (formerly National Front) campaigner Ian Anderson, so supermarket chain ASDA has been celebrating another member of the same far-right racist party, Clive Potter.

This former Unison steward at Leicester Royal Infirmary (he had his steward's credentials removed because Unison didn't believe he could represent black and white members equally) has been named runner-up in the Asda Local Heroes competition.

Potter's photograph has been posted on the wall of ASDA stores as part of the firm's national scheme "to recognise and honour those people in local communities who really want to make a difference". ASDA, whose former chief is Tory frontbencher Archie Norman, explains to the *Eye* that it has honoured Potter for "being a friend" and "helping the elderly". The chain would be "disappointed", it was said, if he made any political capital from his success in the contest. Potter may find this hard since he is prospective National Democrat candidate for Leicester West.

WORLD OF SPORT

DAVID GINOLA's mega-million signing by Aston Villa may do something to reverse the club's poor performance on the football field but it has so far done nothing to reverse the downward spiral of the club's shares on the stock exchange.

As they hit new lows, they are making one man look very wise indeed. Step forward "Dirty Doug" Ellis, the chairman and major shareholder who three years ago took advantage of a brief football mania in the City to float Villa at the absurd value of £125m.

He raved that the float "provides the chance for many more supporters to share in the growth and development of Aston Villa". He gave priority to loyal season ticket holders, inviting them to invest up to £3,300. The deal boosted demand. More than 4,000 punters in claret-and-blue mufflers piled in.

However, at the same time Ellis sold just under one tenth of his own holding for £4m. As he had paid just £425,000 for his entire interest in the club in 1982, that represented a 100-fold profit in just 15 years. And he kept effective control through a 33pc stake to boot.

Since then reality has hit the punters at Villa Park hard. Floated at £11, the shares now change hands for less than £3.50 each. The club is valued at a rather more modest £40m. Season ticket holders who took the full allocation are now nursing losses of £2,600 – or nearly 80 percent of their investment. Ellis did nothing improper, of course: but had he sold his stake today he would have pocketed nearly £3m less. By curious irony, that is almost exactly the same sum being paid to Ginola.

● HAVING generously donated the talented Kevin Keegan to the nation, Fulham FC chairman Mohamed Fayed may be less than pleased to learn that his Harrods corner shop may have been flogging fake England football shirts.

Metro Sport Ltd, which supplies Al Fugger's shop with the jerseys, and its director Mark Donnelly, will appear at St Albans crown court in September charged with supplying shirts which are not officially endorsed.

Number crunching

52

Number of thousands of pounds Roy Keane of Manchester United is paid per week

61

Number of minutes of the new football season Roy Keane succeeded in playing before being sent off

HACKWATCH

Siôn Simon

AS ALL the world knows, Rebekah Wade has kickstarted her editorship of the *News of the Screws* by provoking riots and mob violence. This ingenious stunt has overshadowed her other significant achievement: sacking the paper's only decent columnist, Richard Stott.

Rebekah attended the Blairs' first party at No 10 in 1997 and has been assiduously cultivating them – especially Cherie – ever since. No wonder Stott had to go: though a Labour supporter himself, he had nevertheless been scathingly critical of Blair's government from time to time.

There's no danger of that with his replacement, Siôn Simon (crazy name, crazy guy), an ambitious former Millbank apparatchik who hopes to become a Labour MP. In his first column, on 16 July, he helpfully echoed Blair's complaints about the newspapers' obsession with spin. "I'm surprised that people even know what spin is, or what kind of people doctor it, or why," he sighed wearily. "I'm even more surprised they care. Off hand, there are a hundred things I'd rather think about."

Elsewhere on the same page, Simple Simon introduced "the spin dryer", a weekly spot in which "I'll take the daftest bit of political spin and see what happens when you wring out all the drips". Shome inconshishtency, shurely? Not at all: as soon became apparent, the purpose of this feature is to put a pro-Labour slant on the week's news. And that's the sort of spin of which even Blair heartily approves.

Simon's only problem is working out how best to please his heroes. On 16 July, after watching the BBC documentary about Alastair Campbell, he wrote that "the prime minister's legendary spinner-in-chief was revealed in all his glory. We got to see him for what he really is... er, a rather dull government bureaucrat of bugger-all interest to anyone with a life of their own." Since Campbell himself had said that he couldn't understand the media's obsession with him, Simon assumed this to be the correct on-message line.

By 23 July, however, he was having second thoughts. What if Alastair actually enjoys the limelight? Just to be on the safe side, Simon tried a different approach: "If I were a girl I'd fancy the pants off Alastair Campbell. Labour's spin king is tall, trim, broad-shouldered and boyishly good-looking... Get out there, man. Hit the chat shows. Hit the high streets. Flash that lopsided grin at every housewife. Your country needs you, Al."

Elsewhere in the same column, John Prescott was praised for creating "100 new bypasses, 100 new park-and-rides, 360 miles of new motorway lanes, £180 billion of unprecedented investment in transport". There was also plenty of Brown-nosing (*sic*) for the chancellor of the exchequer, who is spending "another £43 billion trying to lift Britain out of the squalid Tory mess we've been in".

And, as Simon revealed, "it's not even a general election bribe". Labour ministers just do these wonderful things out of the goodness of their hearts. "Every day when the alarm goes at about 6am, they leap out of bed and get straight down to... er, work. No wonder so many pundits and pontificators are so furious. What do these Labour layabouts think they're playing at? How dare they be so constructive and responsible?... How dare they have the lowest inflation, interest rates and unemployment for two generations? And at the same time pour hundreds of billions of pounds into repairing public services?"

By 30 July, it was Philip Gould's turn. After reading the focus group guru's leaked memos, even Blairite commentators began asking if Gould was a liability. How dare they! "Gould is exactly what Tony Blair needs," Simon assured the doubters. "Every prime minister should have one... The Gould memos reveal an intelligent, insightful thinker."

What of another leaked memo, in which the PM mentioned his "overwhelming" political commitment to entering the single currency? The trusty spin-dryer whirred into action: "The leaked memo only proved beyond doubt that the prime minister is being honest about the euro. Yet the press made it seem like he'd been caught with his pants down... It goes to show that sometimes the government really is more spinned against than spinning."

Tall, sexy Alastair Campbell could hardly have put it better himself: not surprising, since Simon was simply repeating, almost verbatim, the Downing Street press officer's own comments. Simon also found space to congratulate the Rev Blair on his NHS plans. "The new GP contract will give local doctors much greater freedom and flexibility, which is great."

On 6 August, Simon achieved a double-whammy by writing about the millennium dome, which is not only a monument to his beloved Tony but also partly sponsored by his generous employer, the Dirty Digger. No prizes for guessing the message: "Ignore the knockers... The good news is that the Dome is still by far the best-loved tourist attraction in Britain... Get down to the Dome and put one over on the pundits."

And, er, that's it. After just four weeks in the job, Simon was so exhausted by his cheerleading exertions he departed for a well-earned rest. Since Tony, Gordon and Alastair were away on holiday, they'd be unlikely to see his column for the next week or two anyway: and what's the point in flattering people who aren't around to enjoy it?

AD NAUSEAM

GLOBALISATION was the corporate buzzword of the 90s, but only now are the effects filtering down into adland.

Massive multinational companies require massive multinational agencies to brainwash the inhabitants of all five continents with their propaganda. And the latest big multinational splash comes from BP, which has recently hijacked all media everywhere with its new "corporate identity".

Design gurus Landor were paid around £7m to turn the old green and yellow shield into a green and yellow flower with an extra shade of green. The accompanying TV work has bits of the same flower floating about to the obligatory Vivaldi soundtrack, and then overdubs a husky honey reciting an array of oxymoronic posers such as: "How can big be caring?"; etc. The message is that now that BP has pooled resources with some other US bully boys (Amoco, Arco, Castrol) it has moved "beyond petroleum" into acts such as saving the planet and securing world peace.

It's another resounding dud destined to fall on deaf ears worldwide, because we all know that petrochemical giants and the environment go together like, well, oil and water, whether or not they like flowers.

The ad agency to blame is the once-great Ogilvy & Mather, itself now rebranded as Ogilvy (and none the better for it if recent results are anything to go by). The global BP account is worth £130m to O&M, a sizeable chunk of its revenues. Yet still client and advertiser have come up with nothing beyond the now familiar lowest common denominator school of advertising, which means that while everyone can understand it, there's very little to understand. Ad agencies love this globalising flimflam: they make a fortune on worldwide media commissions with minimal spend on writing and making the advert. It shows.

Readers may recall that BP used to stand for British Petroleum. Perhaps the reason for the change of tack is that BP's interests now extend some way further than Britain: for example, the recent acquisition of a 2 percent stake of PetroChina, for $600m. PetroChina is a subsidiary of the China National Petrol Company (CNPC) which is 90 percent owned by the Chinese state. Recently CNPC has been involved in exploiting oil reserves in Tibet, where a 4,200km pipeline is planned to siphon off resources from the occupied territory. Pressure groups such as Free Tibet are worried that construction of the same pipeline is likely to use forced or slave Tibetan labour. This is not mentioned in the advert, presumably because BP considers them... *B*eyond *P*ity?

JUST FANCY THAT!

"**BP**. The recently revamped group will show strong growth... Observers look to the oil giant to go from strength to strength... Buy at 597p."

— Recommendation to buy BP shares, *Sunday Times* business section 6 August, p.9.

"**OUT: BP.** The long-term prospects for oil stocks are not attractive..."

— Recommendation not to buy BP shares, *Sunday Times* money section 6 August, p.8.

HOW much longer will companies like BP, Unilever and British American Tobacco (BAT) continue to throw money at the pro-single currency campaign group Britain in Europe (BIE) while Simon Buckby remains its director?

The question must have exercised the mind of Liberal Democrat peer Lord Sharman before he resigned recently as BIE's treasurer. At an BIE executive meeting in May, records of which have been obtained by the *Eye*, Sharman reported a "substantial shortfall" (of around £120,000) in BIE income for the year.

But shortage of money isn't BIE's real problem – as the board is at last discovering. BIE has been in existence for barely two years, but under Buckby's overbearing stewardship has haemorrhaged staff as morale has fallen. Buckby was installed as director at the insistence of his mentor Peter Mandelson and Roger Liddle, the lobbyist turned adviser responsible for Europe and defence in the Number 10 Policy Unit. They had wanted a key "new" Labour apparatchik to run BIE, reporting to them directly.

"Working for Buckby", opined one former Labour party fundraiser, "was like working in a commune." Another now ex-staffer then added: "Yeah – and Simon Buckby is David Koresh."

These "new" Labour acolytes have since departed and have been joined by, among others, Steven Woodward (director of operations); Mark Littlewood (head of regional campaigning); Josh Blackburn (polling strategy); Jo Leadbetter (parliamentary officer); Peter Metcalfe (business relations manager); Matthew Laza (Labour Movement in Europe); Samantha Ferguson (head of admin); Alison Denyer (project manager); Rachel Gibbons (regional campaigns); Paul Cottingham (events manager). Mary Watson, BIE's membership and information officer is set to leave on 8 September.

As the remaining board members survey the wreckage, here are some questions they might ask their bumptious director as he flies back from a luxurious holiday in the sun-kissed Caribbean…

Why, barely four months after his appointment, did Buckby become company secretary of Threesquare Ltd, also becoming a director of the same company along with his brother? Was he required to reveal any extra business arrangements to his new employers? What was and is the purpose of Threesquare Ltd? Does Simon Buckby receive payment for consultancy and other work directly or indirectly related to his paid employment as director of BIE and, if so, is he paid through Threesquare Ltd?

Was Buckby paid through Threesquare Ltd for recent lecture work undertaken for the OSDE Institute in Argentina? And, finally, can the jet-setting Mr Buckby confirm or deny that he received a set of highly attractive Bulgari cuff links from the president of Argentina as a "thank-you" for his very helpful advice?

EDUCATION secretary David Blunkett has appointed Clive Leach to chair the West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council, where he will be responsible for raising standards and solving skills shortages throughout the county.

Blunkett said Leach would bring a "businesslike" approach to the operation – and *Eye* readers may well recall his track record in the world of business.

He used to be chief executive of Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television. By the time the company got rid of him in the mid-1990s, he had saddled YTTV with a crippling annual franchise payment of £53m, presided over hundreds of job losses and lost the company more money through the double-selling of airtime to advertisers (*Eye* 860).

Since then Leach has been a full-time quangocrat, picking up a chairmanship of Leeds TEC (a position he still holds) and serving time as chairman of Leeds health authority (*Eye* 890) as well as a range of other committees of the great and the good. Obviously just the man to ask about shortage of skills.

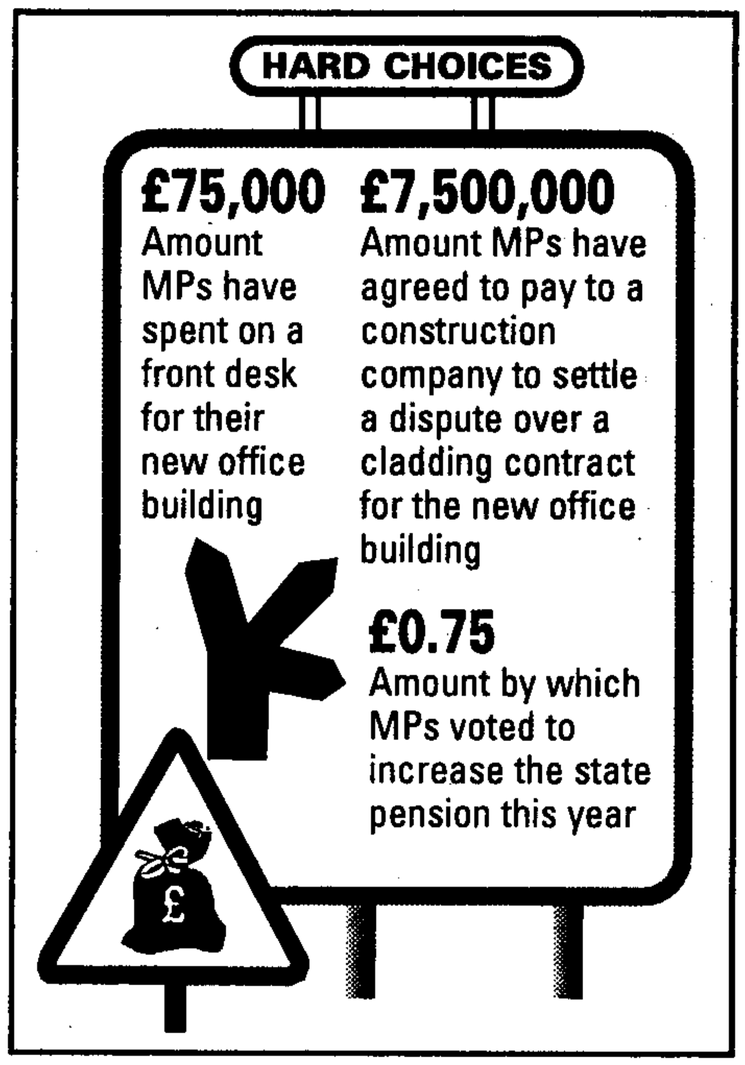
HAVING distanced the government from the Queen Mum's birthday celebrations because "new" Labour hasn't worked out how the monarchy fits into Cool Britannia, Tony Blair and his ministers were left kicking themselves for not being more enthusiastic.

While thousands thronged the Mall and TV viewing figures easily beat expectations on the day, ministers were nowhere to be seen. The Rev Blair had recorded a token half-hearted tribute for news bulletins, but it was thin stuff compared with the effusive greetings of other world leaders.

Proof that Blair and Co cocked it up comes from another of those dreaded focus groups. But this one wasn't the work of one of Blair's shadowy acolytes – it was actually set-up by Buckingham Palace in its first such venture. More than pleased with the results, which they will use to help plan Brenda's golden jubilee celebrations, they helpfully sent a copy along to Downing St.

Blair has vowed not to make the same mistake twice. So having up to now been ambivalent about Brenda's golden jubilee in 2002, Mr Tony has ordered all the stops to be pulled out. And having failed to mark the Queen Mother's centenary with a bank holiday there is now the possibility of a double holiday for Brenda's jubilee. The anniversary falls on a Sunday in 2002 and a Friday and Monday holiday is being seriously considered. Brenda will enjoy signing the order that makes them official.

Meanwhile, though, spare a thought for Mo Mowlam. The minister-with-nothing-to-do was Blair's original choice to oversee the government's low-key plans for the golden jubilee. Alas, the gaffe-prone Mo is to be sidelined again. The jubilee is now high profile after all and so all government involvement is to be handled via the PM's private office.

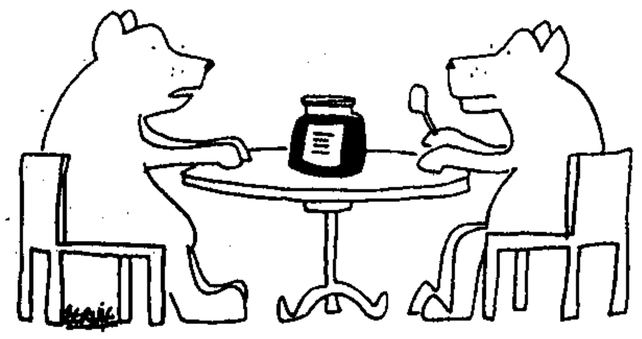

HARD CHOICES
£75,000
Amount MPs have spent on a front desk for their new office building
£7,500,000
Amount MPs have agreed to pay to a construction company to settle a dispute over a cladding contract for the new office building
£0.75
Amount by which MPs voted to increase the state pension this year
£

AS a Labour backbencher in 1992 Peter Hain was one of 10 MPs who signed an early-day motion requesting that MI5 files and documents be made available to an independent inquiry and select committee.

The aim of the motion was "to establish whether the British government connived with MI5, MI6, or any other British intelligence agency, with or without the knowledge of the prime minister of the day, in the supply of defence equipment to Iraq as revealed in the Matrix-Churchill case".

So last month when Blaenau Gwent MP Llew Smith asked in a parliamentary question: "How many British companies are listed in the United Nations report of inspection visits to Iraq since 1991 as having provided technology used in the Iraqi programmes of weapons of mass destruction?" he might have been forgiven for expecting a degree of openness from the former firebrand MP.

Since becoming a foreign minister, however, Hain has gained a more mature understanding of the workings of government and the necessity of keeping certain information out of the public domain. He duly refused Smith's request, explaining that it is not foreign office practice to comment on information provided in confidence by the UN.



"Sometimes I think you only married me for my honey..."

IF ANYONE doubted the government's commitment to the two biggest construction firms engaged in government private finance initiative (PFI) schemes, they should study the appointment to the chairmanship of the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals Trust, one of the biggest such trusts in Britain.

The new chairman is Neil Ashley, 63, who was trained as a civil engineer and has spent his life in construction. Over the last 25 years he has been managing director of ARC Ltd and Balfour Beatty, and is currently non-executive chairman of Amey plc whose head office is in Abingdon – conveniently close to Oxford.

All three firms are engaged in PFI schemes for building hospitals or running railways. Mr Ashley will be a part-time chairman and will be expected to work "two to three days a week". Asked whether he will be doubling up with his chairman's job at Amey, a Radcliffe Hospitals Trust spokeswoman replied: "I have no idea."

NO surprises when Ieuan Wyn Jones, known in the valleys as Ieuan Whinge Jones for his constant complaint that Wales is badly treated by "the London government", succeeded to the leadership of Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party.

He won more than 75 percent of the vote among those party members who bothered to turn up at branch meetings, with contenders Helen Mary Jones (born Colchester, England, 1960) and Jill Evans (born Rhondda, 1959) trailing forlornly. Jones the Whinge, who is both MP and Welsh assembly member for Anglesey, cornered the vote in the Welsh-speaking north. Not many nats live down south or in Essex.

Just how the former leader Dafydd Wigley was deposed is another story. Wigley, the party's biggest asset, is a nationalist of the old school which still harbours ambitions of an independent Wales. Jones likes to portray himself as a moderniser who thinks the old image must be junked in favour of appealing to Middle Wales, just as Blair aims to appeal to Middle England.

Plotters, including Plaid's heavyweights in the assembly, were threatening to challenge Wigley, MP and assembly member for Caernarfon, with a "no confidence" motion, claiming he spent too much time at Westminster and not enough in Cardiff.

Wigley's PA in the city, Nia Jeffries, resigned in disgust at her boss's treatment by the plotters. To save the party's face Wigley resigned the leadership on health grounds, citing his heart operation last December.

ROGER "Currant Bun" Lyons, expenses king of the trade union movement and general secretary of MSF, is hoping his record of claiming for virtually every morsel, and much else besides, will soon be forgotten by his union members. Sadly for Lyons, however, MSF types in the north west are unlikely to be in forgiving mood when they see a yellowing letter currently doing the rounds of chortling union officials.

Dated October 1967, the handwritten note from then junior union official Roger Lyons, based in Liverpool, to Clive Jenkins, then general secretary of ASSET (the pre-ASTMS, pre-MSF union), is a desperate plea to leave Murkeyside and return to the flesh-pots of London. "I am in an area well known for its insularity and parochial outlook and this I have found in abundance," wrote the young but clearly worldly Roger Lyons.

"I live in one furnished room in a miserable section of a dead city and have no friends or relations in the north west. Compared with London, I must now conclude that Liverpool is depressing from a political, cultural and social point of view. And with the hours that I keep as an ASSET officer, I find it difficult to even try to make friends, let alone retain any links with them."

So, no change there then.

NOOKS and CORNERS

WELL, I told you so... In *Eye* 984 I revealed that the contract for restoring the Great Court of the British Museum had gone disastrously wrong.

Following the departure of the British Library (alas) from the BM and the demolition of the library structures around the Round Reading Room which abutted the walls of Robert Smirke's Greek Ionic masterpiece, the original south portico had to be recreated as part of the scheme by (who else?) Norman Foster to open up and glaze over the inner quadrangle.

Smirke's building was faced in Portland stone — like St Paul's and most of the great public buildings of London — so the Foster firm specified that, for the new stonework "oolitic limestone (Portland stone from the base bed or similar)" should be used. But the chosen contractor, Easton, claimed that suitable chunks of Portland could not be obtained and recommended instead a (cheaper) French limestone, Anstrude Roche Claire, insisting that no one could tell the difference. And My Lord Foster agreed.

When this deception was revealed, there was much egg on face at the millennium commission and English Heritage, but even more on those of the British Museum and their famous, fashionable architects. Far from the French stone being identical, it was found to be of coarser texture so the new carved detail of the Ionic capitals was not as fine. And — even more culpable — the joints in the new stonework turned out to be wider than those in the old walls built by Smirke.

English Heritage, faced with this blundering fait accompli, recommended — quite rightly — that all this work to a great grade I listed historic building be done again in the right stone. But this would have held up a flagship millennium project while adding yet more to its £97m cost, so political pressure was put on all concerned to come up with a suitable fudge.

Now the scaffolding is down, it can be seen that English Heritage's alarm was justified. Not only is the new workmanship clearly inferior, but the French stone is a different colour to the original Portland. So what is the reaction of Lord Foster to this embarrassing débâcle? Why, silence.

Just as the wobble in the Millennium Bridge to Bankside was all the fault of the engineers, so the blunder at the BM is to be blamed on the subcontractors, on the conservation advisers — on anybody, in fact, but the great genius who is so used to basking in glory and uncritical adulation. Nobly covering up for him, the BM's director of operations desperately insists that the inferior stone is "entirely suitable for the job" while as for the wider joints, "it may be the current generation of craftsmen is not quite as skilled as the one that built the museum".

This is simply insulting to the craftsmen working under, say, careful conservation architects on most of the great English cathedrals — look at the superb new stonework at Bury St Edmunds, for instance. But what is that compared with the genius of an ennobled, politically-correct, fashionable architect?

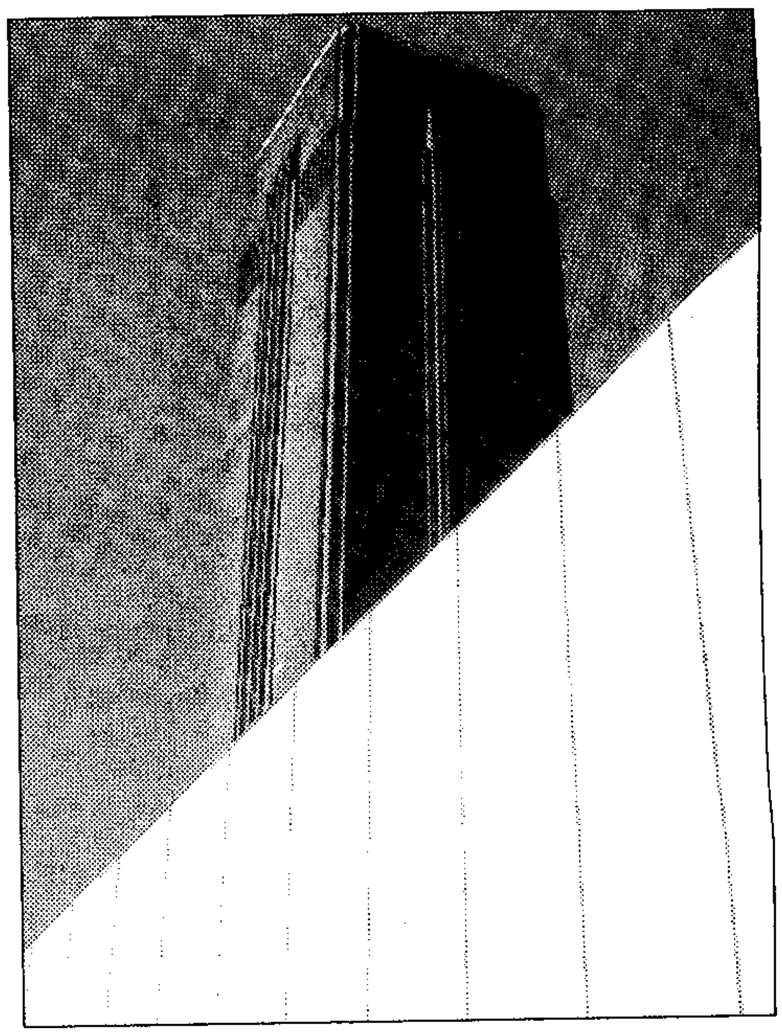
But why was Foster's firm ever entrusted with a job like this in the first place? Not only was the idea of leaving the Round Reading Room in the centre of a glazed-over quadrangle originally proposed by the architect Rick Mather, but Foster's firm has no experience of dealing with old buildings. His whole career has been based on putting up metallic, glazed structures which look as if they have been designed by engineers.

He has no understanding of, and no sympathy for, historic buildings — made, as they are, of old-fashioned, messy "wet" materials like brick and stone. When faced with adapting or extending a listed building, all the currently fashionable High Tech geniuses can think of is to fall back on the tired old cliché of a glass wall or ceiling. We get the architecture we deserve, and the new inner south portico of the British Museum is now a monument to the facile culture in which designers like Richard Rogers and Norman Foster can get first knighthoods and then peerages and — even worse — are taken seriously.

AT LEAST Foster didn't get the job of converting Bankside Power Station into Tate Modern, otherwise there would be little left of the sublime brick structure designed by that truly great architect, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, designer of Liverpool Cathedral and the GPO red telephone box.

The job went to the modish Swiss architects, Herzog & de Meuron of Basel. And, on the whole, a good thing too; although I regret the destruction of Scott's symmetrical ziggurat profile to his building and the substitution of a painfully asymmetrical glass box on the roof. After all, I pleaded here for the listing and preservation of Scott's supreme industrial masterpiece, his greatest "temple of power", a decade ago.

But now the whole thing has been ruined, the careful compromise between old and new utterly spoiled. Since the opening of the Tate Modern in May, a crude rectangular illuminated glass box has been plonked on the top of Scott's old chimney, overhanging the subtly modelled and recessed sides of the soaring brick campanile. Why? It is fatuous, it is ugly — and it (deliberately?) undermines the integrity and sophis-



tication of Scott's architecture. This stupid thing is illustrated neither in the books about Herzog & de Moron's triumph nor on the postcards for sale at the Tate (above). A notice in the gallery tells us that, yes, it was designed by the crop-headed Basel minimalists but in association with Michael Craig-Martin.

This disaster is called "The Swiss Light" and is "a unique enhancement to Tate Modern's chimney and acts as a symbol of the birth of Tate Modern and the reincarnation of Bankside... Artist and architect together have produced a final crowning gesture to define the major architectural and cultural achievement of Tate Modern." Well, er, rubbish. The thing merely symbolises and defines arrogance and insensitivity — and has been more appropriately compared to the cap of a toothpaste tube. And it has been "supported by" the government of Switzerland! How dare the Swiss ruin a great London building designed by a great British architect!

If Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate, still wishes to be taken seriously, and to continue to bask in the glory of having saved Bankside Power Station by creating the new gallery, he should remove this gratuitous insult as soon as possible and allow Giles Scott's magnificent architecture to speak to us uncapped.

'Piloti'

SIGNAL FAILURES

Franchise watch

NOBODY can accuse Stagecoach of never thinking about its customers — not after its threat to sue some of its passengers for libel.

Brian Souter's lieutenants went ballistic when the South Hampshire rail users' group, a voluntary society for passengers, dared publish in its newsletter (photocopied A4 sheets stapled in the top-left corner) an article based on newspaper coverage of a South West Trains disciplinary case. They instructed solicitors to rebut any suggestion in the article that Stagecoach subsidiary SWT might have caused misery and inconvenience for passengers (perish the thought!) and to warn the group: "You have seriously defamed SWT. There is no reason why our client should not sue for substantial damages."

But hang on. If there is any suing to be done, surely it is the passengers who have reason to pursue SWT for its obvious failure to provide the kind of train service for which it takes a fat subsidy (£54.9m this year).

Latest figures show only 85.2 percent of SWT "all day" trains arriving roughly on time. In the last financial year SWT was fined £3.9m — by far the largest fine for any train franchise — for appalling delays, overcrowding and cancellations. But that caused only a tiny dent in Scroogecoach's overall profits (up 11 percent to £244m) and directors told shareholders: "SWT had another excellent year." Shome mishtake, shurely?

A year ago SWT passengers might have thought this kind of evidence would ensure Stagecoach's demise as a train operator. But promises to boot out operators who fail to satisfy their customers have been quietly dropped, and last week Stagecoach was shortlisted for the new 20-year SWT franchise.

The first of the new franchises, Chiltern Railways, looks almost certain to go to current operator M40 Trains, part-owned by construction firm Laing. M40 Trains is one of the few operators which has broken the laughably soft conditions of the original rail franchises — even though the Chiltern line was simple to run, as it was the last to be modernised by British Rail and has its own London terminus (instead of sharing congested tracks like those at Victoria or London Bridge).

In 1997 M40 Trains savagely cut services from some stations and in 1998 it was cancelling so many trains it was ordered by the office of passenger rail franchising (Opraf) — hardly the strictest taskmaster — to spend £2.5m on "passenger benefits" as punishment.

But Chiltern passengers should console themselves that the franchise deal could have been worse. Go-Ahead was the other contender for Chiltern despite its involvement in the Paddington crash (last *Eye*) and its £2.1m fine for abysmal service on Thames Trains in 1999-2000 — a large sum for such a small franchise.

Connex (*Eyes passim*) is shortlisted to retain its miserable South Central franchise for another 20 years. And the shadow strategic rail authority (SSRA) has still not politely told Virgin Trains, in which Stagecoach holds a 49 percent stake, not to waste time bidding for more franchises until it has sorted out the two it already has (which are still the worst performing intercity franchises by a clear margin, with about one in five trains seriously delayed).

The Virgin-Stagecoach monster is not content with being in contention to take the King's Cross to Edinburgh service off GNER; it now also wants to apply its obscene policy of rapid fares increases and poor punctuality, disguised with lashings of PR and unashamed deceit (*Eyes passim*) to the Trans-Pennine route from Liverpool and Manchester to Leeds and York.

At last the mists of confusion are lifting to reveal the SSRA's strategy for rail franchises. It looks something like this: 1) Reward companies with an indifferent, or worse, record of serving passengers by giving them 20-year franchises; 2) Keep the promise of a railway that is publicly owned by Britain and accountable to the public of Britain well off the agenda; 3) Er... that's about it.

Excuse watch

ATTEMPTS to bomb London on the day of one of the Queen Mother's birthday celebrations were useful for the association of train operating companies (Atoc). When the latest official statistics confirmed last week how badly the private train companies are performing, Atoc quickly pointed out that some operators were affected by the security alerts on 19 July. Alas, the biggest punctuality decline (7.1 percent) was on the Merseyrail Electrics franchise — 200 miles from the bomb scares.

'Dr B. Ching'

EYE TV

Lamarr's Attacks (BBC2)
Head On Comedy (BBC1)

MONTY Python's famous Spam sketch was a joke about the limitations of British cuisine, but it can also now be seen as a metaphor for what was about to happen to the country's television. In TV now you have to have comedy with it. Game and quiz shows have now almost entirely been taken over by stand-up comics, and it's pretty common for the stars of dramas — Alan Davies, Dylan Moran, Reeves and Mortimer — to have more experience of dealing with hecklers in a night-club than touring in weekly rep.

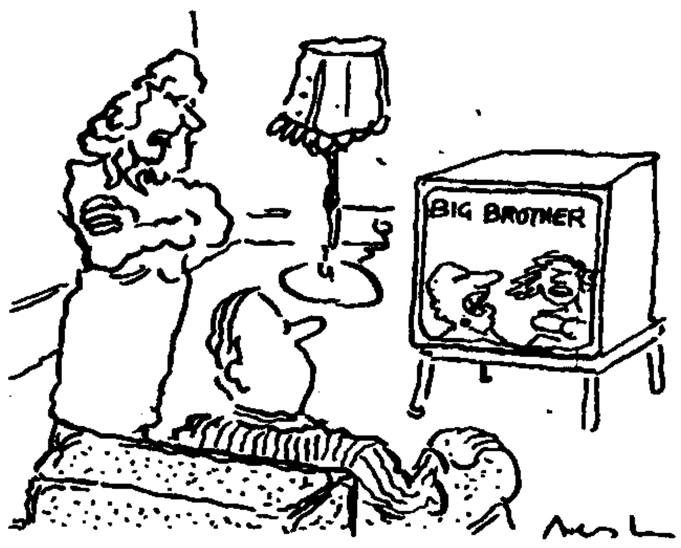
When comedy began its colonisation of the schedules 10 years ago, there were nervous jokes from critics and executives about the possibility of the red nose brigade moving in on current affairs. These fantasies included *Question Time* hosted by Jo Brand and *Newsnight* fronted by Reeves and Mortimer.

Well, never make jokes — especially about comedians. While Vic and Bob have not yet advanced on the chairs of Kirsty and the Jeremys, comics are moving in on serious formats. The most depressing aspect of summer 2000 apart from the terrible weather has been the rise of the news show with gags.

Lamarr's Attacks signals its dodginess from the off with a pun on a movie that most people won't remember. This is probably prophetic because the programme too will almost certainly soon be forgotten. Each week Lamarr takes a theme — last week, it was Fear — and explores it through an unhappy blend of stand-up comedy and sit-down conversation.

While Sir Robin Day was careful not to throw away his bow ties and Jeremy Paxman has his sneer insured against loss or damage, Lamarr has shaved off his one trademark asset: his quiff. This makes him look exactly like Ben Elton and it didn't help that most of last week's comedy routine was about paranoia, central Elton territory. It also seemed unwise that much of the opening monologue consisted of gibes about the idiotic vox pops on current issues given by members of the public. The studio audience sounded uneasy. Do they, as Derek Jameson once asked, mean us?

But at least stabs at gags are what Lamarr knows. It's when he attempts the serious interviews



"Turn it off or I'll nominate you for eviction"

that the curse of the jokey news host becomes most apparent. Sir Ludovic Kennedy had been rather tenuously inserted into the theme of fear on the basis that religion (which Ludo is anti) addressed the fear of death and that one of Lamarr's deep personal terrors is apparently "wrongful imprisonment" which he identified as the subject of Ludo's great campaigns.

There then followed one of the most embarrassing exchanges in television history. Lamarr explained - apologising to the audience in case they took offence - that his fear of wrongful imprisonment was really a dread of "sodomy" which he might risk in prison. Ludo — whose hearing isn't what it was — seemed not to fully understand the question but recognised the reference to forced anal sex and looked bewildered.

He gently explained that — as most of his campaigns are on behalf of the wrongfully executed rather than imprisoned — getting them out before an in-mate got in was not one of the big problems. When they talked about God, the conversation was even more embarrassing. Clearly warned by the producer to play devil's advocate for believers, Lamarr was able only to keep sneering: "That's only your opinion!" When Ludo intimated politely that he knew this — but had been invited on to give his opinions — Lamarr had nowhere to go.

The appearance of Jo Brand as a guest on *Question Time* is generally held to have been a significant breach of the defences of serious news on the BBC. But now, astonishingly, Brand is to be found hosting a summer replacement for *Question Time*.

In **Head On Comedy**, she functions as a kind of sex-crazed Betty Boothroyd, presiding over a debate — sample motion: "This house wants to be a millionaire" — between two teams of alternative comics (Ed Byrne, Patrick Kielty, you know the type) sitting on green leather benches resembling those in the House of Commons.

In fact — and strangely, given that most of the comics come from the non-Footlights end of the circuit — the more obvious comparison is with university debates although the standard of speeches is much lower. The token non-comedian guest — Brian Sewell — loves publicity and must have a high horror threshold as a critic during the rise of Brit Art. Yet, despite these protections, Sewell looked appalled throughout the proceedings.

He later revealed in a newspaper piece that he had been handed some jokes by the producers: presumably so that he didn't stand out as the one saying serious things. It's symbolic of the spamming of news. You have to have jokes.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

Tweety Pie & Sylvester Stallone

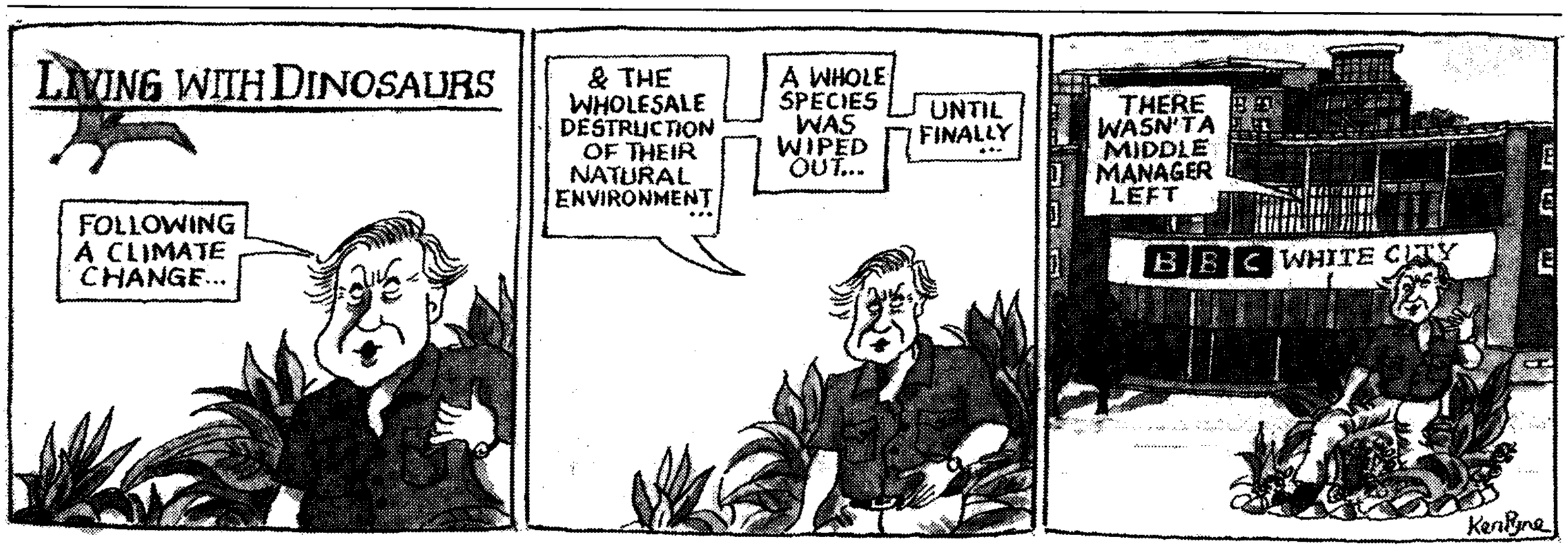
MEDIA NEWS

WHILE it was obvious the tabloids were going to be obsessed by *Big Brother*, rather more intriguing is the *Grauniad*'s enthusiasm for the series.

At the start of a recent article on the programme, Jonathan Freedland said: "Just this once, believe the hype", seemingly blind to the fact that he was making no small contribution to that hype himself. "It has pulled off a trick thought possible only in television's golden past – creating a shared, collective experience," he lathered on, before going on to say that the show is "utterly a product of its time", confirming "our penchant for reality that feels like drama", finally concluding that "we watch and we are watched… we are Big Brother".

Then, the day after "Nasty" Nick Bateman was booted out of the series, the *Graun* covered the earth-shattering event in a front page news story, the cover of G2 followed by a two-page feature and a leader article. To what can we ascribe the paper's fever? Can it possibly have anything to do with the fact that the series is made by Bazal, a division of GMG Endemol – which was, until it sold its stake to Spanish phone company Telefonica a fortnight ago, 50 percent owned by the *Guardian*? Telefonica must be awfully grateful for its former partner's continued interest in the project.

But not everyone at the *Grauniad* is so thrilled with the new obsession. The daily press round-up on its Guardian Unlimited website last Friday included the following: "The eviction of Nick Bateman from Channel 4's gameshow *Big Brother* is featured on every front page save those of the *Financial Times* and the *International Herald Tribune*. Why it matters is nowhere addressed, let alone explained, though the *Guardian*'s G2 section offers a long, muddled analysis of its cultural importance."


LIVING WITH DINOSAURS
FOLLOWING A CLIMATE CHANGE...
& THE WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT...
A WHOLE SPECIES WAS WIPED OUT...
UNTIL FINALLY...
THERE WASN'T A MIDDLE MANAGER LEFT
BBC WHITE CITY
Ken Pyne

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON — UP NORTH KNIFE & PACKER

EDINBURGH FRINGE
RIGHT, STAY CALM... I'VE JUST HEARD THERE'S A REVIEWER IN!
DRESSING ROOM #1
HAVE YOU WORKED OUT WHO IT IS YET? I KNOW IT'S UNPROFESSIONAL BUT I'LL PITCH THE WHOLE SHOW TO THEM. DO WHAT IT TAKES TO FIND OUR REVIEWER!
I DON'T THINK THAT'LL BE A PROBLEM

OLD habits die hard in the new BBC – notably the ancient tradition of stealing ideas without acknowledgement or compensation. The latest victim of such a rip-off is medical writer Rita Carter.

Back in 1997 Carter was working on her book *Mapping the Mind* – a pioneering attempt to introduce non-scientists to the amazing discoveries that were emerging from brain labs. Thinking that it might be suitable for TV adaptation, she sent a draft to Stephen Lambert, then the editor of "Modern Times" at the BBC.

Lambert was enthusiastic and asked for further material – case studies, names of potential interviewees, sample illustrations. Until then, the idea of making a series on the subject hadn't occurred to the BBC, but the suits soon decided that popular neurology might well be the next big thing. By the beginning of 1998 Carter had been told that *Mapping the Mind* was "on course" to be a "landmark" series for BBC2 in the summer of 2000.

Shortly afterwards, however, Lambert mentioned that BBC2 boss Mark Thompson wanted to be sure that the scientific content was "sound" before definitely commissioning the series. A surprising remark, given that Carter's consultant on *Mapping the Mind* was the highly respected Christopher Frith, professor of neuropsychology at the Wellcome Department of Cognitive Neurology, and that the book had also been approved by several other eminent scientists who had been employed to read it by her British and American publishers.

What Thompson meant, it transpired, was that a "sound team" was required. This sounded suspiciously like a euphemism for "we need a sexy expert to front it" – especially as Robert Winston was at the height of *Human Body* stardom at the time.

Step forward gorgeous, mini-skirted Professor Susan Greenfield. Although she was supposedly under contract to Channel 4, the BBC lured her away with a barrowload of money and proudly announced that she would present a trailblazing new series in the summer of 2000 called, er, *Brain Story*.

And so it came to pass. With the exception of a two-minute sequence about an experiment that took place after *Mapping the Mind* was written, *Brain Story* has nothing – not a single interview, case history, neurological disorder – that wasn't in the proposal Rita Carter submitted three years ago. Can they by any chance be related?

GOING LIVE

LAUREN TAYLOR, reporting live from the Blairs' holiday retreat in Tuscany for the ITN lunchtime news on 8 August, scaled new heights of pointlessness.

She revealed that the family had appeared for "a three-minute photocall to which reporters were not admitted". Any other insights? "All questioning was forbidden."

As John Suchet in the studio put it: "Thanks Lauren".

THE resignation of veteran legal correspondent Joshua Rozenberg has left managers at BBC News reeling. They assumed he was too old to jump ship to the *Daily Telegraph*, where he began work this Monday as the paper's new legal editor.

Since the disastrous amalgamation of radio and TV news, which forced hacks to work for both media, and the equally disastrous move into the new "news centre" in 1998, Rozenberg had found it almost impossible to get on the air. There was an influx of young, telegenic reporters with no specialist knowledge who were favoured above the bald and bearded Rozenberg, supposedly because they made the subject more "accessible".

Rozenbeard, who has been at the BBC for 25 years, had three meetings with news boss Tony "Head Prefect" Hall after announcing that he was leaving. Hall offered him £180,000 to stay, almost double his present salary. Rozenberg explained that it wasn't a question of money but of a fundamental change in the attitude to specialist hacks. He said it was hypocritical for BBC News to claim that specialists were at the heart of its news reporting when he and many colleagues were continually ignored and sidelined.

By way of reply, the Head Prefect merely begged him not to make public his real reasons for leaving the BBC. It remains to be seen whether Rozenberg is willing to oblige.

ROY HATTERSLEY's glowing *Newsnight* tribute to Sir Robin Day was indeed generous. But what Hatters seems to have forgotten is Day's aside at an Edinburgh television festival when they shared a platform.

After one of Roy's ripostes Sir Robin launched into a withering tirade, saying he "did not think we could get through the evening without something cheap from Mr Hattersley".

THE BBC's technology division could soon be up for grabs following director general Greg Dyke's announcement last month that it is to be turned into a private company, provisionally called BBC Technology Limited, which will sell broadcasting and IT services on the open market as well as internally.

The BBC's head of corporate marketing Jane Frost has emphasised the need for a corporate identity to rival existing brands such as Microsoft, EDS, Siemens and Andersen Consulting. One of her suggestions is that the company should be called Kingswood Warren, which is, curiously, the home of the BBC's research and development division, a department which is supposedly remaining firmly within the main body of the Beeb.

At a presentation on 3 August Frost admitted the BBC brand is "recognised and trusted" but pointed out: "We can't take it with us if we sell/float." She argued that BBC Technology has a negative association with BBC Resources Limited, whereas Kingswood Warren would provide an opportunity to "develop and build a brand equity that is saleable".

Surely Frost is not imagining a time when the new company, expected to rake in a profit of between £150m and £200m over the next six years, could be sold to one of its aforementioned competitors?

Frost's well thought out brief overlooks one colossal howler. The planned logo for Kingswood Warren is a three-dimensional rabbit intended to represent "adaptability and speed". Unfortunately in the world of new technology that the Beeb is so keen to break in to, the first association that will come to mind is the ill-fated Rabbit hands-free phone network.

"WHY does it seem so difficult to find out the precise cost of something?" asks a local radio hack on the Beeb's pointless Forum Online chat page.

An instant management reply is posted two weeks later: it's a matter of "leadership", apparently. Only "managers" making "difficult decisions" (ie whose budget to slash) need to know. After all, "to provide comprehensive financial detail can lead to unproductive disagreement". The author of this secretive tosh? David Reeves of "Corporate Internal Communications".

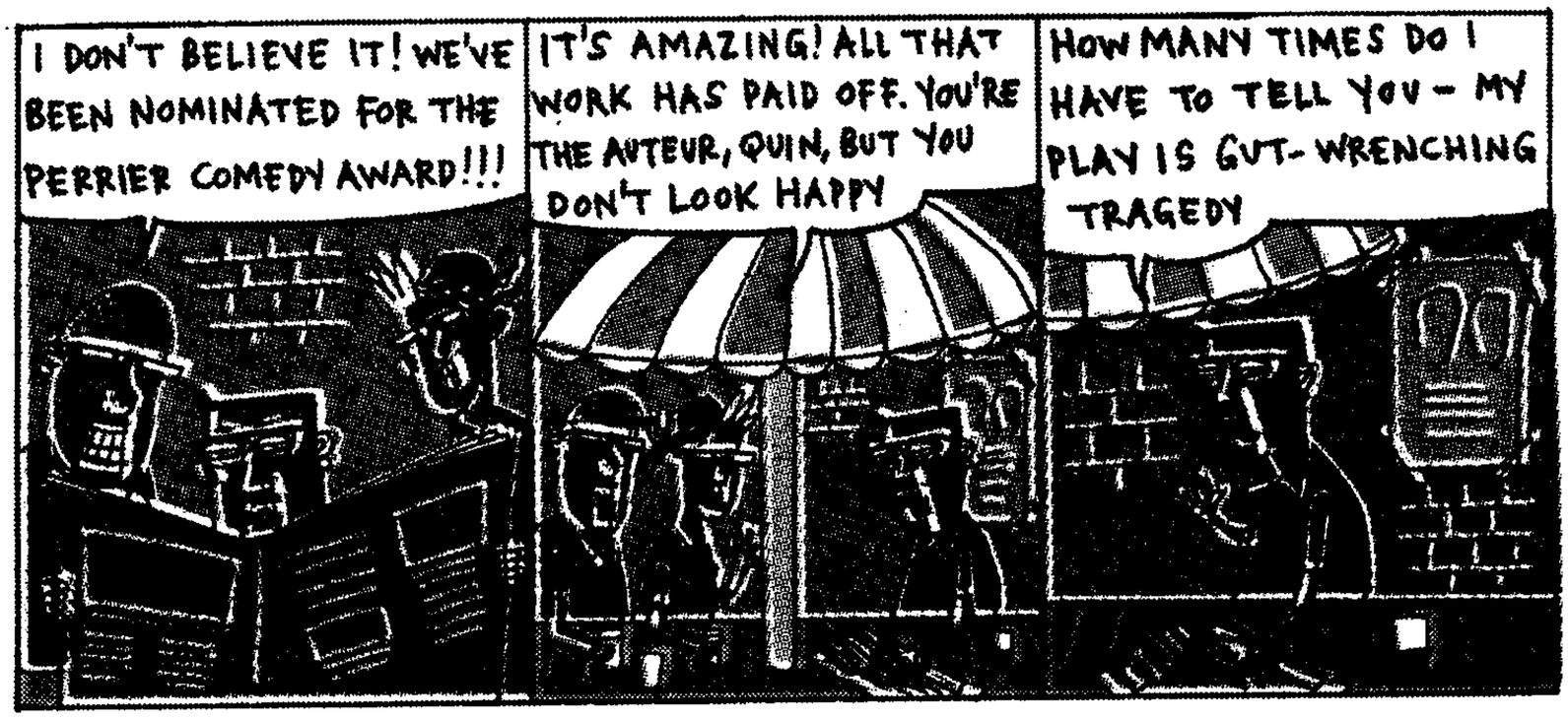
The BBC's expertise in internal communication is further revealed in a shocking catalogue of email complaints from staff who have found that their jobs have been "abolished" via voicemail messages. One complains that after hearing the message he was told that a face-to-face meeting would not have changed the fact that he was to lose his job – so why bother with one? Another moaning minnie reveals his name and is promptly warned "obviously he has no desire for a future in the BBC".

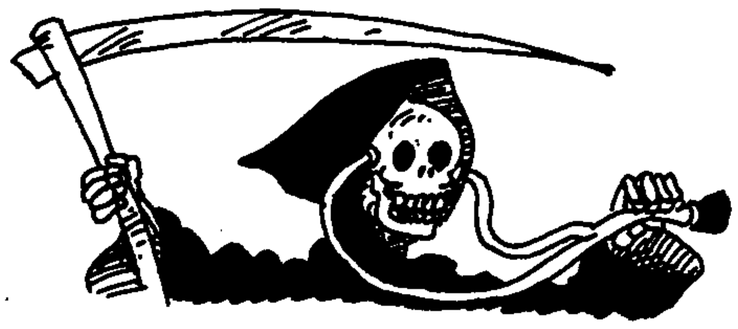
Thankfully a senior manager tries calm things down: "Quite frankly we need to change things", he admits, adding: "Greg is committed to making that change". The degree of brown-nosing on display here reveals only the urgency of this particular suit's desire to survive the management purge that Dyke is preparing. The name of the suit? David Reeves of corporate internal communications.

ENGINEERS at the BBC's parliamentary channel in Westminster took a call last week from an executive at BBC News 24 complaining that he couldn't see any output from the House of Commons.

The engineers politely suggested that this might possibly be because parliament had been in recess for the past three weeks. Oddly enough, a week earlier they had been rung by BBC Online, who were complaining about exactly the same thing.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON — UP NORTH KNIFE & PACKER


I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WE'VE BEEN NOMINATED FOR THE PERRIER COMEDY AWARD!!!
IT'S AMAZING! ALL THAT WORK HAS PAID OFF. YOU'RE THE AUTEUR, QUIN, BUT YOU DON'T LOOK HAPPY
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU - MY PLAY IS GUT-WRENCHING TRAGEDY



DOING THE ROUNDS

Focus on Plymouth

IN November 1998 Jason Bradley, information manager at Plymouth Hospitals trust, sent a prophetic letter to the *Health Service Journal* regarding waiting list fiddling."For many years I have had responsibility for collating waiting list figures... Tory health spokesman Philip Hammond [MP for Runnymede & Weybridge] is wrong to say there has never been such pressure to distort the figures. The Conservatives regularly focused on waiting lists while demanding efficiency gains. One of the great lessons under the Conservatives was how to achieve targets by manipulating figures..."

Eighteen months later the trust chief executive Arthur Wilson and his deputy Martin Cusack resigned after the Plymouth waiting lists were, er, fiddled: 90 patients who had been waiting for more than 18 months for surgery just disappeared from the records. As one consultant said: "On a number of occasions members of staff were told by hospital managers to leave patients off the list, to make sure targets on waiting lists were met."

Cusack and Wilson may actually be relieved to be out of a trust that's been in deep shit for several years. Plymouth is a very deprived area (the teenage pregnancy rate is a third higher than the UK average) and the workload is huge.

Last December the Derriford hospital (part of the trust) was so full the nearest intensive care bed was in Wolverhampton. In January a heart attack victim had to wait five hours for a specialist bed and died; and there was no intensive care cot for a critically ill baby. Intensive care consultant Colin Ferguson said: "We are under a lot of stress and I am afraid that we are not delivering the quality of care that we would like."

Staff recruitment has also been a problem. Last August plastic surgeon Judy Evans was put on paid leave from Derriford while the quality of her work was investigated: 82 of the 90 patients waiting more than 18 months needed plastic surgery. In January, Dr Evans was called in to operate on three NHS patients at the local Nuffield private hospital, even though she was still on leave from the trust. Those waiting list targets just have to be met...

Staff relations have also become frayed. In 1995 locum surgical registrar Dhuban Choudhury sent six anonymous letters to the patients of thoracic surgeon Joe Rahamim claiming that he wasn't properly qualified and had bungled their operations. The letters were found to be without substance and when the General Medical Council (GMC) finally heard the case in July 1999, Choudhury was struck off for a year.

"I'm afraid we've lost him"

Rahamim was then exposed on *Channel 4 News* as having two numb fingers from a whiplash injury and being the only thoracic surgeon in the country with no postgraduate surgical qualification. This latter was not a barrier to becoming a consultant when he was appointed in 1992 and both internal and external inquiries found his death rates for lung and oesophageal cancer surgery were comparable to the national average. Occupational health experts also passed his fingers fit for surgery and he is now suing Channel 4.

Two more angry Derriford surgeons went to an employment tribunal in January claiming they had been racially discriminated against when they were overlooked for merit awards. Brain surgeon Jagdev Mohan and orthopod Maher Halawa alleged that "a small circle of white male doctors used the merit scheme to reward friends". As Mr Mohan expanded: "Racist attitudes exist within the hospital trust... The old pals act doesn't work for us as it does for the white majority."

Their allegations were corroborated by an analysis of the applications for merit awards at the trust. Dr Aneez Esmail, a researcher into racial discrimination, found that no objective criteria had been followed in awarding payments. "I was appalled by the huge variation... Some people had been awarded payments on the basis of very poor applications that looked like they'd been written the night before." Between 1996 and 1999, the trust made 104 merit awards with none going to ethnic minority doctors. The trust acknowledged that the system "may be flawed" and settled with the doctors.

Any suggestion that the new management in Plymouth will have an easier life was quickly dispelled when the trust was "named and shamed" this month by the government for — wait for it — failing to reduce waiting times. A hit squad has been sent in and opposition health spokesman Philip Hammond has made another vacuous comment. The trust itself has recruited 36 Filipino nurses and John Arnold, acting director of operations, is upbeat. "We have a recovery plan in place and the number of patients waiting more than 13 weeks for an outpatients appointment has already started to fall."
Whatever you say, John.

M.D

Down on the Farm

THE OUTBREAKS of swine fever in Suffolk, prompting a European commission ban on British pig exports, have struck a body blow at what remains of Britain's pig industry. But the Brussels spokesman who nevertheless commended the Maffia for its "prompt and efficient" response to the crisis cannot have been wandering around East Anglia when the highly contagious disease was first reported.

The first suspected outbreak at Faccons Bottom Farm in Suffolk was reported to the state veterinary service (SVS) on 4 August. The farm at Iken was visited by a veterinary official, who sent samples to the Maffia's veterinary laboratory at Weybridge. The results, showing the herd was infected, were not forthcoming for four days. This was blamed on a power failure at the lab.

The following day, after most SVS staff had first heard about the outbreak from the media, a huge influx of 100 vets and officials flocked to Bury St Edmunds to set up a "crisis centre". There was only one phone line. Fax and email facilities were soon out of order. The whole chaotic operation had to be directed by mobile phones. Two staff did nothing but ring round desperately trying to find local hotel accommodation.

Officials who had been on infected premises were freely mingling with others who were about to test sows on clean farms. Others were moving from farm to farm, regardless of whether the fever was suspected or not. Confronted by orders from London that two farms which had received pigs from the same source as Faccons Bottom should only be covered by a "protection zone", one vet, Margaret Johnson, decided to ignore the order and carry out a full inspection. She was right. Both herds were found to be infected and promptly slaughtered.

After two days working round the clock to bring order into chaos, she and her assistant were surprised to be taken off the case. Johnson had to return to the Norwich office the Maffia wants to close down, and her assistant was told to return to normal duties, coincidentally on the day the crisis centre was due to receive a regal visit from the minister himself, Nick Brown, surrounded by the usual fawning Maffia entourage.

Suddenly the crisis centre was filled with "more chiefs than Indians", whose "high-handed and offensive manner" towards the hard-pressed officials on the spot did nothing to improve the general air of shambles.

Eventually orders were given for slaughter of the herd suspected to have been the original source of the infection at Quidenham. All the sows had to have a blood sample taken, but the vets had run out of pig bleeding needles, so the animals' tails were having to be cut off with secateurs bought from a local garden centre. Maybe veterinary officials in faraway Brussels were impressed by what was going. But their admiration was not shared by observers on the spot, who described the handling of the crisis as "the usual SVS cock-up, in spades".

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

Down on the Fish Farm

AFTER 14 months' chin-wagging the Scottish executive rural affairs department (SERAD) has published a "concordat and report" devised by a working group representing SERAD, fish farmers and wild fish interests to ensure a better future for wild and farmed salmonids.

Of the group's 23 members, 19 were government officials and quangocrats, fishery scientists or fake-fish farmers. And their concordat is of course a load of tosh.

It calls for a more co-ordinated approach "...essential for the joint objectives of securing strong, healthy wild stocks and a sustainable aquaculture industry". And how does it propose to achieve this? Through a meaningless action plan, set out in an even more meaningless flow chart.

This latest whitewash, the sole aim of which is to protect ungovernable fish farmers from public scrutiny, is so fatuous ("Initiate Programme, Develop Plan, Implement Plan", etc) it is amazing anyone was foolish enough to put a signature to it. Who would be so daft? Step forward the *Eye*'s old chum and fish farm-lover, senior SERAD civil servant George "Why me?" Thomson.

Meanwhile there has been another glorious cock-up for John Home Robertson, Scotland's clueless fisheries minister. Every single fish farm in Scotland is operating illegally. Applications to lay mooring buoys for boats servicing fish farms were never advertised as they should have been. Sam Mourini, Scottish executive (SE) transport division, is alleged to have said that his predecessors simply "rubber stamped" applications.

Panic-stricken SE officials are now engaged in a massive cover-up. Fish farmers have been "invited" to apply for retrospective approval. A flood of adverts for permission to lay moorings is now appearing in Scottish regional papers, suggesting these are applications for new moorings. But the majority have been in place, illegally, for years.

The Crown Estate, owner of seabed sites where fish farms operate, has moved quickly to cover its backside. A spokesman said: "We have fully undertaken all our duties of consulting and advertising and we have to assume that the statutory consultees have done the same." The SE denies any illegality, but a spokesman added: "The department is considering the situation for such moorings with two fish farm companies, and has asked for a report on current licences available."

Who could these companies be? One is Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd, owned by the Dutch multinational, Nutreco. Marine Harvest has been prosecuted three times in recent years for breaching Scottish environment pollution agency (SEAP) rules and regulations. A fourth case is pending. According to Seap's policy statement on enforcement, "Persistent breach of licence conditions will not be tolerated." Oh yeah?

'Old Trout'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

BROWN SAUCE

DURHAM city council's (currently suspended) deputy leader Mildred Brown has been crowing in the local press that she has been "vindicated" after a decision by the CPS not to prosecute her over an attempt to pressurise fellow city councillor Joe Anderson. Brown may have escaped prosecution, but vindicated she is not.

In January (*Eye* 994) we told how Brown and senior council officers, including director of operations David Marrs, had racially abused the Labour council's former principal safety officer, Mac Williams. After his attempts to get an apology failed, Williams, a Labour party member, brought an employment tribunal case but was forced to settle for £6,500 before the hearing after potential witnesses were warned that their jobs were at risk if they backed him.

Friends of Williams were also angered by the way he was let down by Unison, his own union. One Unison officer working on the case admitted that he did not want it to go ahead because some of the accused officers were his personal friends. (Labour party and union members were further appalled in June when an Asian secretary at Unison's Newcastle office, which had handled Williams' case, was paid off to prevent her bringing a case for sexual and racial harassment against a senior male colleague.)

Labour party members in Cllr Anderson's Croxdale ward, concerned about the way racism in the city council was apparently being swept under the carpet, demanded that regional officials set up an inquiry. Brown then turned up on Anderson's doorstep (*Eye* 1001) demanding that he use his influence to get the investigation dropped.

She showed Anderson a letter which she had "found in her locker", containing very serious but false allegations against Anderson, and implied that it would be widely circulated if he did not do her bidding. But Anderson went to Knacker, who took the matter so seriously that Durham city's police chief, Superintendent Eric Suddes, handled the matter personally. Anderson discovered that police had had a copy of the letter a year previously. They destroyed it after concluding that the allegations were false, and informed the council's chief executive Colin Shearsmith and leader Maurice Crathorne. How a copy survived and found its way into Mildred Brown's locker is therefore a mystery.

● **IT'S A CASE of jobs for the girls in Middlesbrough, where one Sarah Connolly has just started work as £20,000 a year political assistant to the council's ruling Labour group. Ms Connolly, a graduate whose recent political experience includes working behind the counter at the local branch of WH Smug, beat 70 other applicants to land the post which, despite being a political appointment, is funded by local council taxpayers. The fact that Ms Connolly's mother Sylvia is deputy leader of Middlesbrough council and her father George is also a senior councillor had no bearing on the success of her application.**

LOTT OF DOSH

INSPECTOR Knacker is keen to have a long and detailed discussion with John Marshall, former deputy planning chief of Restormel council in Cornwall. All because he nipped into the office one weekend six years ago and made a teeny-weeny change to existing planning permission for a business park on the A30 at Roche, altering the approval from five big non-retail warehouse sheds to four big sheds plus one which could be broken up into multiple units.

Shortly afterwards receivers handling the affairs of the site's bankrupt owner, Michael Lott, put in plans to develop a 50-unit "shopping village". Marshall managed to keep this secret from councillors and other prying eyes for 18 months, until planning chairman George Down found out and promptly rescinded it. That decision went to appeal and John Prescott's environment department decreed that the whole process should go back to square one.

This was the cue for Michael Lott, now out of bankruptcy, to sue Restormel for compensation for the "loss" he will suffer from the change back to original usage compared to the huge profit he would have made from building the factory village. He is demanding the equivalent of the entire revenue from the sale of Restormel's council houses last year — £10m.

● **THE current issue of Durham city council's organ, *City News*, apart from containing a hilarious excuse for the council's failure to keep the grass cut in the city's open spaces — it tends to grow more quickly in the summer, apparently — boasts that crime is down because of the increased use of CCTV cameras. This presumably does not apply to Claypath, the street in which Tony Martin, the Durham cobbler who is waging a one-man campaign against the council, has his shop (see *Eyes passim*). In June the council and police refused to let Martin see footage from a CCTV camera overlooking his premises after a woman came in and warned him that his legs would be broken if he persisted in his campaign. Then in July Martin was warned that the collection of *Eye* cuttings in his window could cause a breach of the peace because, er, someone might be so annoyed by them that they might put a brick through his window. In the light of these threats, Martin is not reassured to find that the CCTV camera near his shop has been removed.**

CARRY ON COUNCILLOR

DETERMINED to carry on against the odds is disgraced Labour councillor Damien O'Connor, who represents Manchester's Newton Heath ward. No one from any of the parties will sit with the burly 34-year-old after he was convicted of defrauding the Labour-run council out of £8,800 in housing benefit. O'Connor was considered lucky to get 240 hours' community service, rather than jail. Manchester council leader Richard Leese has urged him to quit for "stealing public money", as has the local press, but O'Connor is sitting tight.

THE PLAID TRUTH

THE Plaid Cymru leadership of Caerphilly council has made an important contribution to the debate on freedom of speech.

Chief executive Malgwyn Davies and legal director Ian Medlicott, backed by council leader Lindsay Whittle, have come up with a bizarre misinterpretation of the local government code of conduct, the effect of which is to bar opposition councillors from speaking in debates on subjects which concern them!

When Lib Dem Kevin Etheridge wanted to take part in a debate on a planned by-pass in his own ward, the officers ruled that he could not speak against it because he had a "closed mind" on the issue. Whittle, who in opposition was a most voluble debater, said he could not possibly disagree with the officers' wise decision.

● **OPEN government is flourishing in Manchester, where the city council's housing department denies it has a secret agenda to flog off council houses to private landlords – "stock transfer" in the jargon. Director of housing Eamonn Boylan said in June that there was no sell-off plan, but "the council is looking at investment opportunities... to arrest the decline in housing stock standards". Residents who were puzzled by what this meant had a clearer idea after a memo from assistant housing director Susan Triggs to her staff was leaked. "To stop unnecessary controversy," she wrote, "when writing reports please don't refer to 'stock transfer', use the phrase 'options for investment in housing' or something similar..."**

Pseuds Corner

Ever since man raised his knuckles from the dust he has sought to control nature. The primitives used ritual and magical charms. Modern-day religions are developments of this. But in an increasingly secular era, science and technology have become the gleaming new saviours, offering a future akin to religion's Paradise. In cyberspace we are disencumbered of our corporeal presence. Some even fantasise of downloading our minds, surviving forever in the digital domain.

For some 30 years, Concorde has been seen as a totem of such aspirations. Earthlings craned upwards in wonder as it soared through the cerulean. Its supersonic boom marked the smashing of a parameter which had fenced man around since primitive times.

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON
The Times

In a parliamentary written answer, junior health minister Gisela Stuart said the European Commission advised that honey containing trace amounts of pollen from GM crops is not classified as a novel food, and can be sold throughout the European Union.

In addition, she said that work by the laboratory of the government chemist showed that the amount of GM material in honey is likely to be no more than 0.00000000003g to 0.000000005g in a 500g jar.

Organic Farming

Ilse Crawford, ex-editor of *Elle Decoration* and creator of Donna Karan's home collection in New York and editor of the soon to be launched *Bare* magazine is getting married on Thursday at Babington House in what will be a sensory spectacular. Ilse is marrying Oscar Pena – design director of electronics firm Philips. Ilse designed the decor of Babington House, which is owned by Soho House's Nick Jones.

The wedding will have a crusader theme, originated by top textile designer and art director Carolyn Quartermaine, which includes a wedding feast outside, on long lines of tables, dressed with antique linen, old decanters, petals, hops and elder flower. There will be a lounging area housed in Mongolian Yerts [sic] by the lake with leather and Moroccan rugs, serving orange blossom and mint tea with real Turkish delight. The feast itself is being put together by Kevin Gould who runs London's Real Food Store and includes birds stuffed with berries, plus Neal's Yard cheeses. Entertainment includes fire eaters and a hippy band, plus a party in the main house and a DJ from XL Recordings.

The wedding guests will include many London celebrities and people from the design world. **The wedding is being photographed by Interior photographer, Niccola Bruant.**

The wedding may make an interesting subject for a style feature in terms of the unique food and decoration, or linked to Ilse's reputation as a style guru.

Press release sent out by Brave PR

Throughout these investigations, Poole's exhaustive research is never lacking in persuasive technique, tracking not only the history of video games but also considering the played experience of that history as a form of social commentary of even philosophical allegory. Hence, perhaps, his arch yet apposite triptych of quotations at the beginning of the book: from Plato, through T.S. Eliot to Lara Croft, defined by the exclamation of discovery, Aha!

MICHAEL BRACEWELL
Sight and Sound

Contributors: Anon, Allan Macline, Sunday Times Style Section, David Petrie.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Wing tip

Sir,

Whenever there is a tragedy in this world, with resultant deaths and injuries, there is one reaction upon which one can always rely.

Private Eye will inevitably publish a cartoon or article in appalling taste and causing deep hurt and offence to the survivors and the bereaved.

On the occasion of the Concorde disaster the cartoon on page 23 (Eye 1008) was banal, pathetic and certainly did not move me to the heights of outrage that I have come to expect in order to galvanise me to renew my subscription.

You can and must do better.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN W. GORDON,
Knutsford, Cheshire.

Eye wash

Sir,

Have your logic circuits gone on holiday? (PE 1008)

1. Signal Failures. Sun flaring off rail lines is difficult to see when the sun is behind you, as it would have been behind the Thames Trains driver who was heading West. All evidence is that the sun rose in the east that day.

2. Concorde and the Eye's prescience (deja flew?): the recent horrible Concorde crash did not involve any explosion of the wing. Anyway, liquid-fuel-filled wings are unlikely to explode as the liquid fuel is difficult to ignite. Had the tanks been emptier, it might have been possible. But they weren't so it wasn't and they didn't.

3. Satire vs Schadenfreude. In Street of Shame you attack the cynical newspeople for their "no Britons, no stars involved" response to the terrible crash which must have caused all the passengers terrible fear in their last seconds alive. Then you trivialise a serious accident with the "Wing and Prayer" cartoon which has no real commentary to make on the aircraft's history nor its demise, is not specific to Concorde and would cause gratuitous anguish to anyone involved with the victims.

4. Hard Choices. The purpose of taxing fuel is to suppress demand. The benefit to the treasury of £5bn income is a bonus. The bonus is redistributed to all taxpayers in the form of the non-imposition of an extra 2p/£ on income tax. Winners all round and a slight improvement in the air quality.

BUT on the other hand, the Gordon Brown cover was wonderful!

LIONEL SHAPIRO,
London NW3.

Seeing the light

Sir,

Reference the item about light shining on signals rendering them impossible to see (Signal Failures, Eye 1008).

When I was a lad, I seem to recall a simple device called semaphore signals, bloody great tin arms that swung to three positions (I think). Not too much doubt about them. If the bugger was horizontal you stopped, and any other position had an appropriate meaning. Is this too simple or am I missing something?

Yours looking for illumination,
PETER FUNNELL,
Ferndown, Birmingham.

Lookalike

Gnome-like Character

Bloke Off The Telly

Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the resemblance between that bloke off the telly whose name escapes me, and the cute, gnome-like character who stars in the advertisements for the internet bank, First Direct? Are they fuggin' well related or something?

Yours faithfully,
ENA B. AL-FUGGER,
Knightsbridge.

Biting comment

Sir,

Re: Tooth sucking, Eye 1008. Before the debate continues further, please could I point out that the average liberal, woolly-minded, Tie and Dye Frock-wearing social worker also encounters "Tooth Suckers" during the normal course of duty. There are several points, however, which are taken into consideration by social services departments which could be of use to the constabulary:

Tooth sucking is not a criminal offence.

Nor is it an offence worthy of beating someone with a truncheon, harassing them, persecuting their families or searching their homes without good reason.

A professional person, rather than a macho arsehole with a small Penis, is able to take minor insults on the chin, whilst continuing to do the job for which he has been trained and is paid quite a lot of money.

I hope this information could prove useful in future race relations work.

Yours faithfully,
RUTH SHIPSTONE,
Wakefield, Yorks.

Sir,

Regarding "sucking teeth". This has been directed at me many times over the years, usually by plumbers and car mechanics. I have always assumed it to mean "You're looking at trouble there, mate". Have I been labouring under a delusion all this time? Are they really suggesting I've been neglecting mum lately? Would someone a little more au fait with these matters also let us know whether sucking and kissing teeth are the same thing, and if not, how can the latter be accomplished with the minimum of slobber?

I think we need to know in order to avoid possibly embarrassing social gaffes.

GREG POWELL,
Via e-mail.

Museum peace

Sir,

Your correspondent reports that "in selling his private collection of Renaissance and Baroque medals" National Gallery of Scotland director Tim Clifford "was in clear breach of the Museums Association Ethics Code" in 1996 (Eye 1007). I'm sorry to disappoint you, but an investigation undertaken by the Museums Association Ethics Committee concluded that Tim had not fallen foul of rule 6.5 ("Museum professionals must not deal [buy and sell for profit] in material covered by the institution's collecting policy") as "he did not form the collection as a speculative acquisition with the intention to resell at a profit". That is, when he bought medals he intended to keep them, not deal in them. The committee also noted that Tim sought, and received, permission to proceed with the sale from the chair of his trustees.

The Ethics Committee went on to note "While Mr Clifford does not appear to have been in breach of the letter of the Museums Association's ethical rules, the committee regrets that his actions have put him in a position where his conduct has been brought into question."

With best wishes,
MAURICE DAVIES,
Deputy Director, Museums Association, London EC1.

Nice wok

Sir,

As the unnamed researcher who received his yearly bonus in cigarettes instead of cash, (Backbiter, HP Sauce, Eye 1008) I must correct you on two points. Firstly, I take no credit for being the catalyst for the T&GWU's campaign to improve MPs' staff's pay and conditions, but am happy to applaud its efforts. Appalling pay rates for parliamentary staff (regularly less than £14,000 pa) have been a going concern for years now and the T&G's petition, which was submitted to Downing Street contained almost 350 signatures, not the 22 you mention.

Secondly, my employer Stephen Pound was moved to offer me his prized treasure of B&H Gratis points, not the fags themselves, which I wouldn't dream of depriving him of. Although it was an unusual substitute for a cash bonus, I took great comfort in redeeming the points for two pillows and a wok, which have proved very useful.

As for the appalling puns offered by an anonymous "staff spokesman" surely these could only have come from a Liberal Democrat. At the risk of lowering myself to the same level, could I suggest that my experience was the first instance of a "wok-related bonus"?

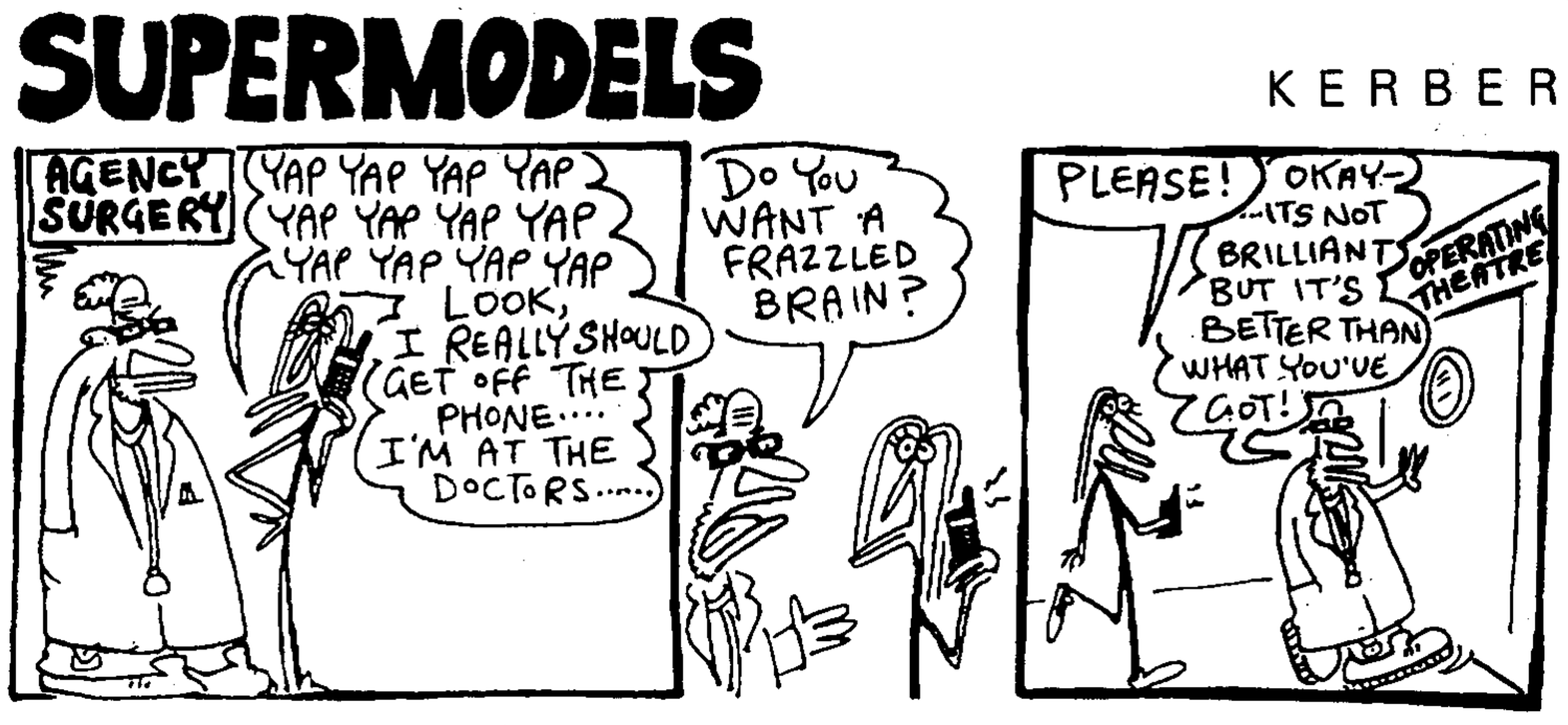
Yours apologetically,
RICHARD CHAPMAN,
Assistant to Stephen Pound, MP for Ealing North.

Kindersley surprise

Sir,

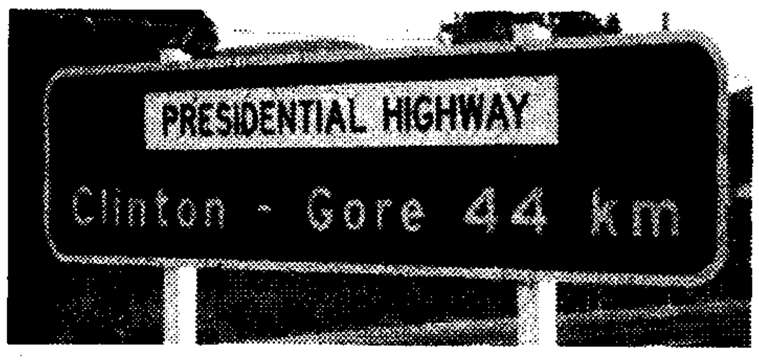
Your report mentioning the 350 full-time staff who have lost their jobs through Mr Kindersley's lack of knowledge of what goes on in his own business (Eye 1008) is somewhat understated. The direct sales division of DK gave independent part-time employment to 14,000 people in the UK and 40,000 world-wide, all of whom now wish to tell Mr Kindersley where to shove his organic carrots!

Yours sincerely,
GORDON GREENFIELD,
Barnet, Herts.


SUPERMODELS
KERBER
AGENCY SURGERY
YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP YAP
LOOK, I REALLY SHOULD GET OFF THE PHONE.... I'M AT THE DOCTORS.....
DO YOU WANT A FRAZZLED BRAIN?
PLEASE!
OKAY- ...ITS NOT BRILLIANT BUT IT'S BETTER THAN WHAT YOU'VE GOT!
OPERATING THEATRE

I-SPY

South Island, New Zealand



Submitted by Juliet Collis. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Hook, lie and stinker?

Sir,

With reference to the Scottish fisheries minister's rubbishing of Old Trout (Eye 1008), perhaps it is he who is suffering from a nasty dose of New Labour spin disease.

The East Coast rivers of Scotland, where there are, er, no sea cages, have indeed had a better run of wild fish this year. On the West Coast, where sea installations abound, the decline has been catastrophic, and many rivers are now almost completely devoid of migratory fish.

To quote the scientist of the Wester Ross Fisheries Trust "From our researches we have come to expect that any river under three miles long flowing into a sea loch with a salmon farm in it will be dead as far as migratory fish are concerned".

And to quote the minister himself "So why let facts get in the way of such prejudices".

For a more comprehensive and erudite report, he should read Michael Wigan's article in the June edition of The Field.

Yours sincerely,
I.P.F. MEIKLEJOHN,

Moray, Scotland.

Word in your shell-like...

Sir,

Is "Old Trout", who lambasts the Scottish shellfish farming industry in Eye 1007, not aware that shellfish farming is "v. profitable", "low o/hds" and "easily managed"? That's the description in a small ad in, er, Eye 1007, anyway.

Yours fishily,
TONY WALTON,

London N12.

Dumb and dumber

Sir,

I don't often have this problem with your esteemed organ, but I didn't understand your Lookalike sent in by Christopher Holden. Surely the two buildings shown look alike because they are both refurbished power stations, designed by the same man?

Put me down for your Dumb Britain column.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BARRETT,

Via e-mail.

Healthy interest

Sir,

Just for the record and to ease the minds of any commissioning editors who might be misled by Street of Shame 11 Aug.

I quit Dr Foster in early July to go back to being a freelance health hack which I have been for over three years.

Alan Maynard has agreed to be an adviser to Dr Foster but has not helped compile any questions.

I am a well respected freelance with awards to my name. I had a genuine story to write about the fact that most NHS data is rubbish, lies or just meaningless (ask Phil Hammond, ask the department of health, ask the BMA). So Maynard — an acknowledged international expert — was the man to get a quote from.

Otherwise Street of Shame's inference that I wrote a frivolous puff piece in the Sindy on 30 July to line my own pockets was spot on. Thanks for the check call lads.

I hope my reputation is not Carter-Rucked.

Jeers,
MARK GOULD,

Via e-mail.

***PS:** Do I get a year's free subscription?*

Now NoW

Sir,

Am I alone in thinking that there should be a register of News of the World readers?

Surely we should be told if such people are living in our midst?

Yours faithfully,
MR C. WYBREW,

Via e-mail.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Simon Mayo: *Ted Hughes, who was Poet Laureate from 1984 until his death; Dead or Alive?*
Contestant: *Alive?*
Radio One
(Charlotte Littleboy)

"He's got two short legs breathing down his neck."
CHRISTOPHER MARTIN JENKINS, Radio 4
(D.B. Gardner)

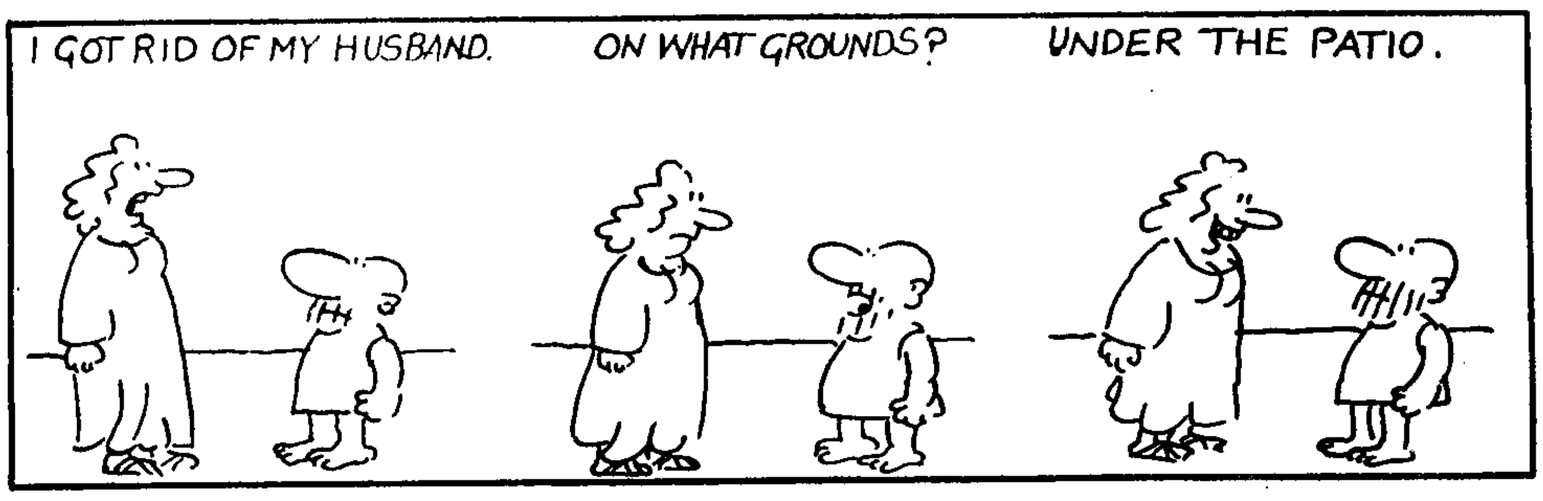
"Donald Bradman is not a tall man, and we know the Queen Mother is neither."
MARK NICHOLAS
(Pete James)

"[The Government should provide] fundamentals, like underwear for people at the bottom of society."
ROY HATTERSLEY, Radio 4
(Clive Lawrence)

"In some ways, cramp is worse than having a broken leg. But leukaemia is worse still. Probably."
KEVIN KEEGAN
(Olivier Morris)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



Letter from **Malaysia**
from Our Own Correspondent

YET again we have to hide our heads in shame from the rest of the world. Anwar Ibrahim, our former deputy prime minister, heir apparent and now opposition leader, has been sentenced to nine years in jail for buggering his driver, aided and abetted, according to the courts, by his brother and much baby oil.

Never mind that the case against him was full of holes, as it were. Or that Mahathir Mohamad, our veteran prime minister who seemed to tire of his ambitious protégé, had found him guilty even before the trial started, appearing on national TV to describe — with appropriate hand gestures — how Anwar had masturbated one man while screwing another. And all this in a country where until recently you couldn't say "condom" on television!

If nothing else the whole affair has done wonders for sex education in Malaysia. The impact on the reputation of our judiciary has been less kind, however, as we now joke that we have the best judges money can buy.

It seems it didn't make any difference that the driver on whom the prosecution case was pinned couldn't really remember when exactly he had been sodomised. Suddenly being told to drop your trousers by the then second-most powerful man in the land is obviously an eminently forgettable experience.

The Royal Malaysian police were very helpful, reminding him that the incident had taken place one night in 1994. Then it was changed to 1992. But that proved a little tricky to stand up because the alleged love nest in question hadn't been built then. In the end Anwar was charged with committing sodomy some time in the first quarter of 1993 — putting paid to any alibi, especially when his official diaries for that period mysteriously disappeared.

Some worry that the driver was a tad confused, changing his story so many times that even his lordship commented that this was a witness who said one thing one day and another the next. At one point the driver even testified that he hadn't been sodomised by Anwar at all. But the prosecution explained this by revealing that he was of low IQ and a poor educational background. Which makes it all the more amazing when you consider how well he's done: he's now a company director.

Of course the reason the man had patiently waited so many years to expose Anwar, coincidentally producing his revelations when the relationship between the deputy prime minister and his boss had broken down so irretrievably, was because he was a pious Muslim. Irrelevant that he himself was caught with his sarong around his ankles last year *in flagrante* with a young lady who was not his wife. We all know he had nothing to gain from smearing Anwar, as the learned judge himself so wisely pointed out.

In court the judge told Anwar he was a sick man. Actually many of us believe him to be peculiarly healthy. The man had virtually run the country himself, he had a wife and six children and — according to his detractors — umpteen girlfriends and boyfriends on the side. Now that takes stamina in our hot climate.

But it is true Anwar was no match for Rahim Noor, our police chief, who personally beat him unconscious. Admittedly Anwar was at a slight disadvantage being handcuffed and blindfolded in a police cell at the time. Still, he survived without any medical attention for days. We Malaysians are a tough people, but shame is another thing.

Some foreigners say our justice system leaves a bad smell in the air and that the real problem here is our prime minister, who has been in power for 20 years, longer than any other leader in Asia. One of our award-winning novelists seemed to agree when he wrote a bestseller about our country's political situation called, er, *SHIT*.

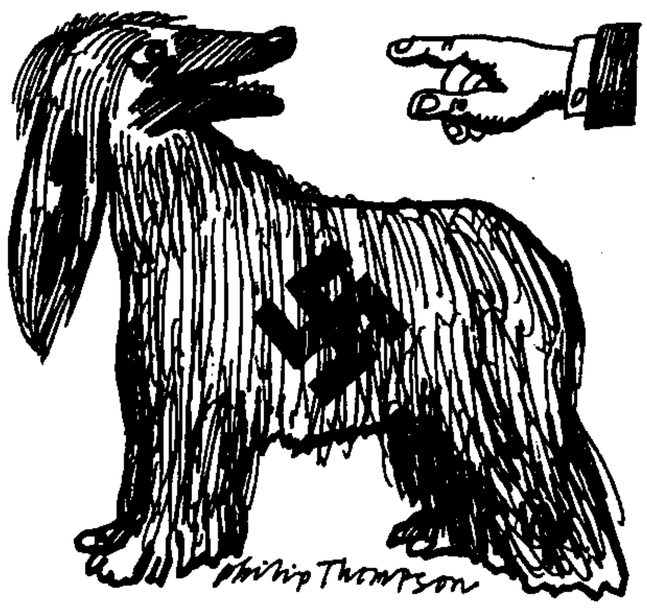
The plot is simple: a piece of ageing shit is stuck in the bowels causing a terrible smell and refusing to leave. A vicious battle ensues and finally the malodorous old shit is expelled to the glorious relief of all. Wishful thinking in our case... but nobody can deny we are an anal lot.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● *Dear Ann Landers: My wife and I are beginning to get rid of our belongings, in anticipation of entering a retirement home. It is proving to be a backbreaking job. The worst part is deciding what to keep and what to throw away.*

For as long as I can remember, we have enjoyed an all-wool afghan that was given to us by my parents in 1935. It was hand-knit by my great-grandmother, and has a big swastika in the middle. Great-grandma was a dear woman, gentle and kind, and not the least bit political. I'm sure when she knitted this piece she had no idea that the swastika was the symbol of Adolf Hitler's Nazi party. What would you do with this afghan, Ann? R.K., Bel Air, Md.



Dear R.K: You are asking the wrong person. Personally, if I came across an afghan with a swastika on it, I would throw it out." *(Detroit Free Press, 30/5/00. Spotter: Will Loggie)*

—●—

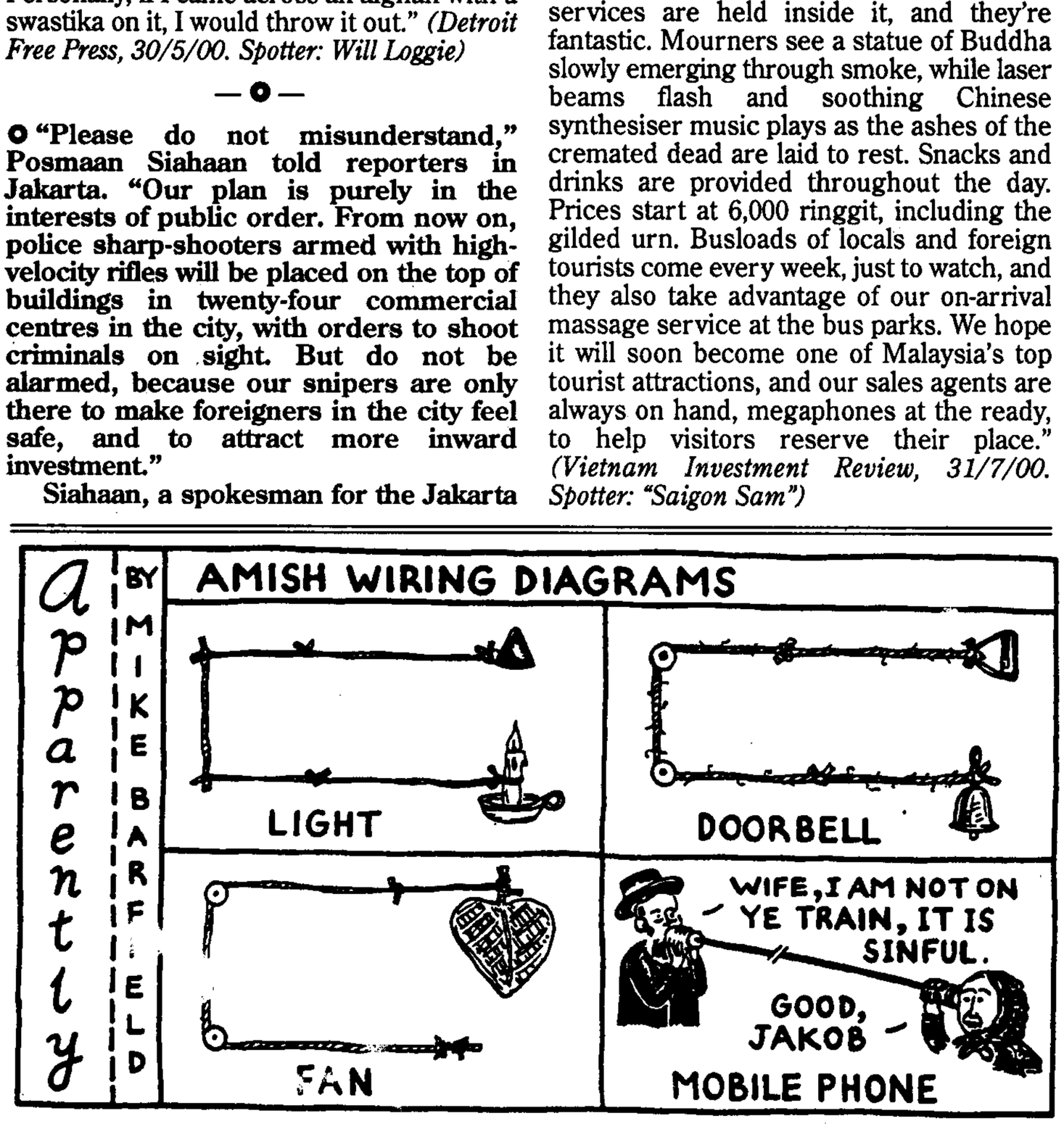
● **"Please do not misunderstand," Posmaan Siahaan told reporters in Jakarta. "Our plan is purely in the interests of public order. From now on, police sharp-shooters armed with high-velocity rifles will be placed on the top of buildings in twenty-four commercial centres in the city, with orders to shoot criminals on sight. But do not be alarmed, because our snipers are only there to make foreigners in the city feel safe, and to attract more inward investment."**

Siahaan, a spokesman for the Jakarta legislature, then explained the reasons behind the decision. "Something must be done about the increasing number of cases of pick pocketing and bad behaviour, and this is our firm-but-fair response. Yes, we are completely confident that these highly-trained sharpshooters will be able to identify and shoot thieves, rascals, and pickpockets, without making many mistakes. It's true that they are quite a long way away from the ground, but they have special binoculars and top of the range mobile phones, so there should be little or no confusion. Do not worry. The deployment of these snipers will be carefully regulated, to ensure that they don't start shooting at people indiscriminately, because such killings would only cause further problems. And we will also ensure that the gunmen are not hired by paramilitaries to take revenge on rival criminal gangs. It occurred to us that there is a possibility of gang leaders bribing them to kill their competitors, but it would of course be quite wrong for the police to start taking sides." *(Indonesian Observer, 3/8/00. Spotter: Timothy M. Pitt)*

—●—

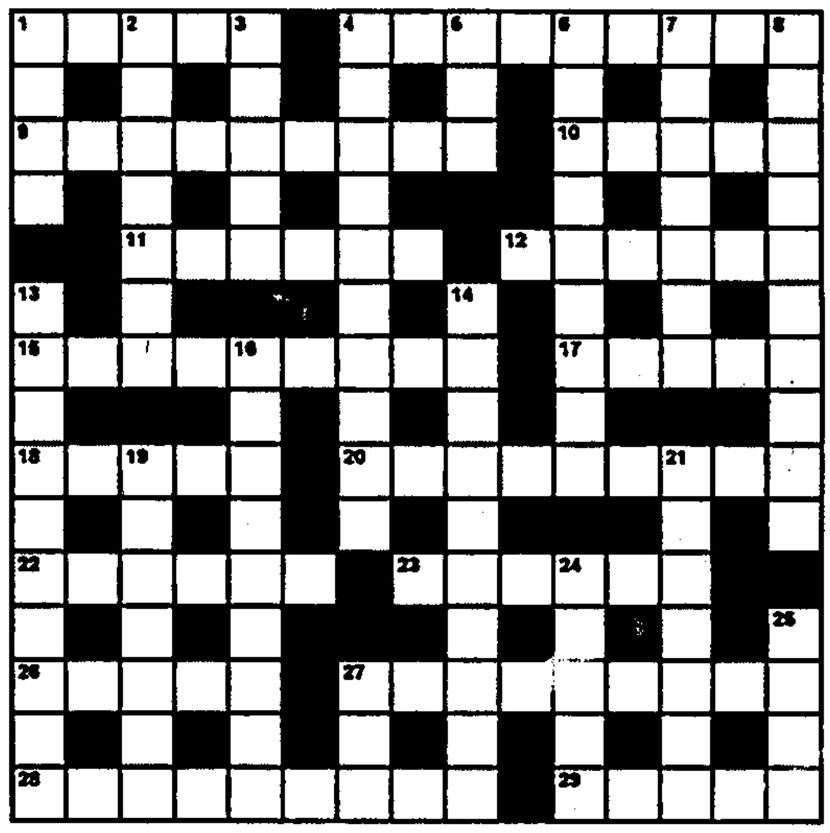
● "Tasteless? I think not," declared David Kong Hon Kong as he showed reporters around his Nirvana Memorial Park in Kajang, Malaysia. "We are simply trying to shed the dreary images of death by turning the cemetery into a modern tourist playground, something that is a fun place for all the family. And what is wrong with that?"

Kong, the chief executive of NV Multi Corp (which owns the Nirvana Memorial Park), then drew attention to some of the 206-hectare cemetery's many attractions. "Our centrepiece is this 300-metre dragon, which is as tall as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and fully air-conditioned. The funeral services are held inside it, and they're fantastic. Mourners see a statue of Buddha slowly emerging through smoke, while laser beams flash and soothing Chinese synthesiser music plays as the ashes of the cremated dead are laid to rest. Snacks and drinks are provided throughout the day. Prices start at 6,000 ringgit, including the gilded urn. Busloads of locals and foreign tourists come every week, just to watch, and they also take advantage of our on-arrival massage service at the bus parks. We hope it will soon become one of Malaysia's top tourist attractions, and our sales agents are always on hand, megaphones at the ready, to help visitors reserve their place." *(Vietnam Investment Review, 31/7/00. Spotter: "Saigon Sam")*



EYE CROSSWORD 164

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Bill started to get an urgent desire and moan (5)
4 Is "Blow men!" all about this? (6,3)
9 Collapse with success on top of Donald Trump (5,4)
10 *Eye* briefly in charge of jiggery-pokery (5)
11/12 One who reckons a 'nooky sort of thing' gives your member a good rest (6,6)
12 (see 11)
15 Obligatory board member dead against a politician like Hague (9)
17 African people express disapproval at brief sexual intercourse (5)
18 We hear trooper Bill has reversed balls (5)
20 Detumescence makes psychiatrist wither (9)
22 Sediment round chamber-pot — given the baby treatment? (6)
23 City technique Beckham employs (6)
26 Back-to-front cap on party substitute member (5)
27 Political deception turns of course to gutless Hattersley (9)
28 Like Brenda draws profits from books, etc. (9)
29 They can cause pricks to turn sore to a point (5)

DOWN

1 Virgin competition near to getting the pop singer's girlfriend (4)
2 Rogue senator betraying the Government (7)
3 Unbelievable plot, all right, at centre of stink (5)
4 Official residence of moral campaigner suffering space invasion (5,5)
5 Formed point underneath nuts (4)
6 Even less sensitive figure makes an accommodation for Blair (6,3)
7 St Leger flutter keeps the overworked member up (3-4)
8 Lapses of Labour's leader welcomed by arses (10)
13 Diplomat's southern trouble: being into endless Mars Bar abuse (10)
14 Just the field for those concerned about their waterworks? (10)
16 One who's been had on floor, pail overturning (5,4)
19 Stupid, your being off this (7)
21 The man who lied to a point may be heard regularly on radio (7)
24 Leading politician's second-rate retreat (5)
25 A magazine's looks (4)
27 Businessmen getting caught with sexually undiscriminating type (3)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 1.9.00. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

Solution to Crossword No. 163

Winner: B. JACKSON

ACROSS: 1 Angel 4 Dresses up 9 Acerbic 10 Evacuee 11/12 Soixante-neuf 12 (see 11) 15/14 Penal settlement 17 Runnymede 18 Landslide 20 Erect 22 WASP 23 Backside 27 Humdrum 28 Imagine 29 Bandwagon 30 Sweet.

DOWN: 1 Adams apple 2 Grecian 3 Libya 4 Dick Turpin 5 Eden 6 Spare tyre 7 Shuffle 8 Pleb 13 Annexation 14 (see 15) 16 Last straw 19 Newsmen 21 Edifice 24 Keats 25 Ahab 26 Smug.

GLENDA SLAGG

Fleet Street's Big Sister!

HATS off to the Princess Royal!! (That's Princess Anne I'm talking about, stoopid!!!) 50 years young!!?!?! And this beautiful English Rose doesn't look a day over 16?!!??

How do you do it, Ma'am!?!?! It can't be face cream and Royal Jelly alone!!?!?

It's got to be something in your blue blood!!?!? Or is it the loving kindness in your heart that spills out and turns you into the world's most beautiful woman!!?!

God bless your Royal Highness!!?! And keep you in life eternal!?!?

PRINCESS ANNE!?!? Blimey, what a dog!!?!? Fifty years old!?! More like a hundred and fifty, if you ask me??!?

No disrespect, Ma'am!!! But have you thought of a course of face creams and Royal Jelly!???! Or do you like looking like one of your horses!!?!

No wonder you don't want your picture in the papers!!?!?

Take a tip from Auntie Glenda. Put your nosebag back on and give us all a break!!?!? (No offence, Your Majesty!!!)

OI, YOU!!?! Mr Pressman!!?!? For Gawd's sake, give Euan Blair a chance!?!?!

He's only a teenager, for crying out loud!!?! He's on holiday and letting off steam!!?!?

Which of us can honestly say we haven't run around hotel corridors all night letting off fire extinguishers and playing with the lifts while fellow guests were a-snoozin' and a-woozing'!!?!!?

Good on yer, young 'un!!?! Have a large one on me!!?!

EUAN BLAIR!!! Whatta disgrace??!?

If you ask me he's the real BABY of the family – not little Leo!!?!?

How would he like it if he was trying to get forty winks and some yobbo was running up and down the corridor at 3 o'clock in the morning, setting fire to the hotel?!?!

Come on, Tony!!?!?! You're supposed to be a Control Freak!!?!? So do something about your son – before he ends up on a murder charge!!?!

HERE THEY ARE!!! Glenda's Bonk Holiday Romeos!!?!?!

● **David Shayler**!!!??! I've got a few secrets you can spy on, Mister!!?!?

● **Nasser Hussein**??!?! You can bowl this maiden over, Mr Skipper!!?!?!

● **Alain de Botton**!!?!?! Crazy name, crazy guy!!?!?

'RESPECT OUR PRIVACY' PLEADS SHOWBIZ COUPLE

by Our Media Staff **P.D. O'Phile**

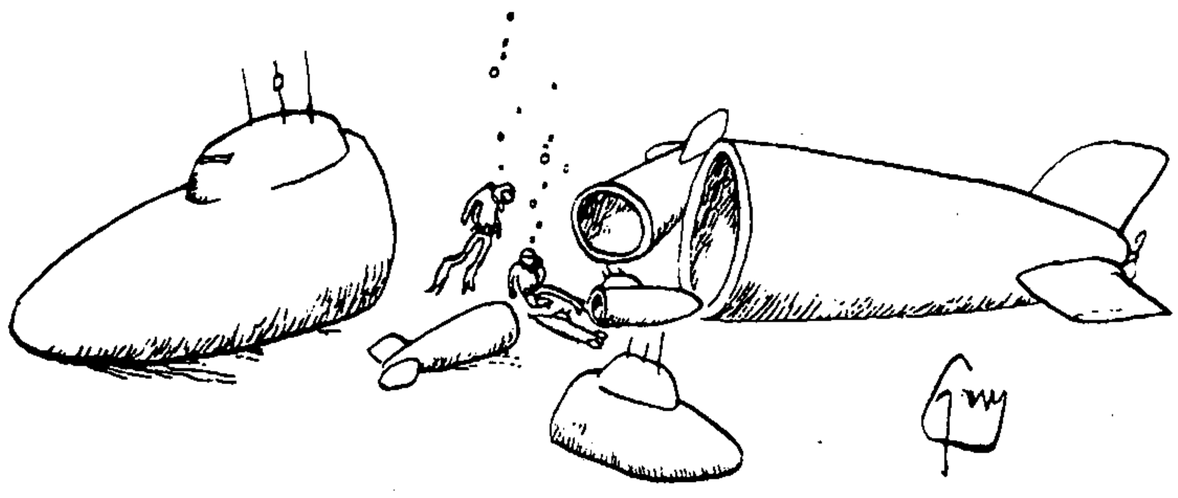
TOP showbiz couple Rebekah Wade and partner Grant Mitchell pleaded with the press yesterday "Leave us alone!"

Said Grant, 47, "Rebekah is just an ordinary editor of the News of the World trying to get on with her job of exposing perverts and getting people to burn their houses down. She has a right to be left alone."

Last night the couple pleaded with local police to move them to a safe house where they could make a fresh start.

OTHER NEWS

Man not on the telly any more **3-79**



NO SIGN OF LIFE IN DOOMED SHIP

by **Our Man In Drowning Street**

HOPE was fading fast last night for the crew of the stricken Conservative Party, lying at the bottom of the Polls.

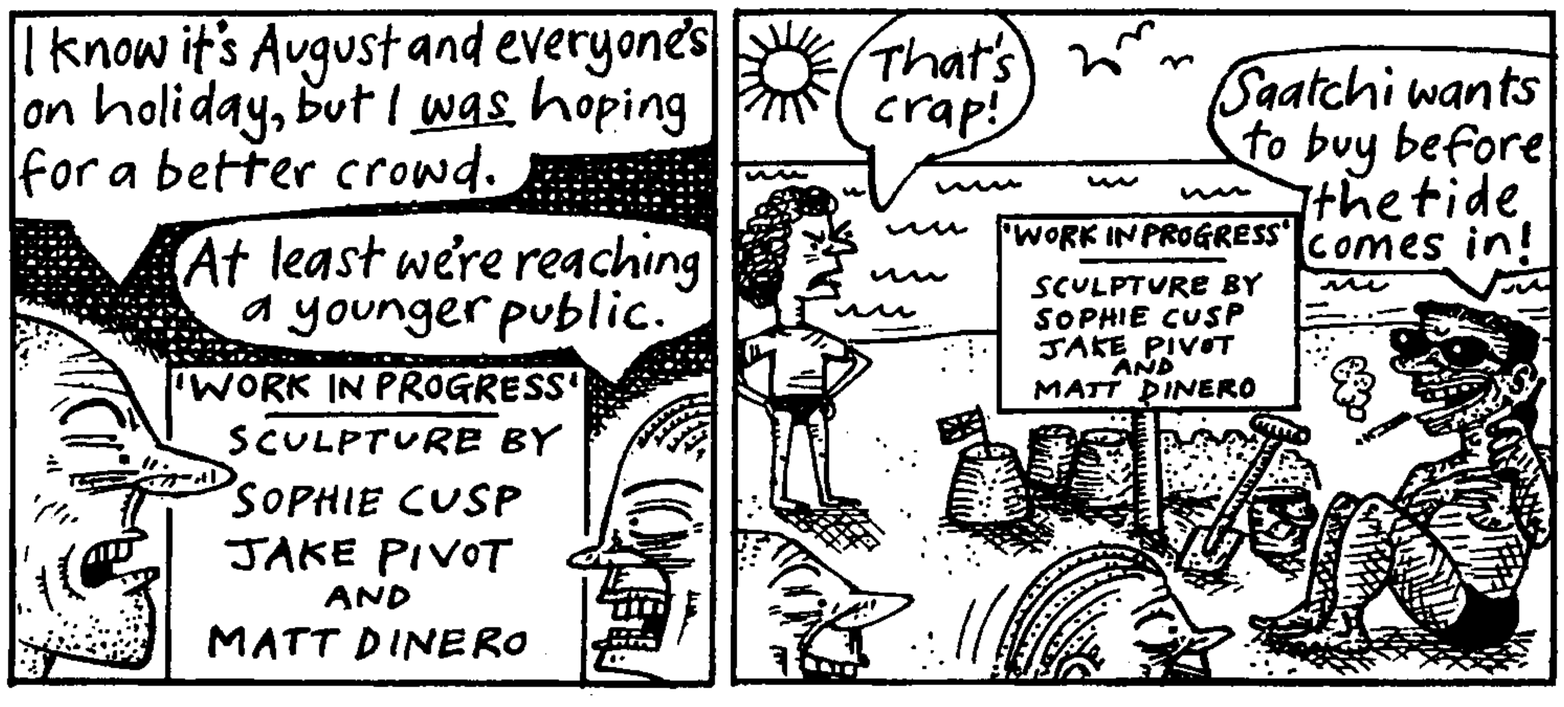
Despite the efforts of expert pressmen led by Sir Charles Moore to bring it to the surface, the Tory Party remained beyond all hope.

KURSK OF GNOME

Responsibility for the disaster is being laid at the door of the Captain William Hague – who had only limited experience and panicked when things got out of control.

As rescue attempts continue *(cont'd p. 94)*

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH


I know it's August and everyone's on holiday, but I was hoping for a better crowd.
At least we're reaching a younger public.
'WORK IN PROGRESS' SCULPTURE BY SOPHIE CUSP JAKE PIVOT AND MATT DINERO
That's crap!
Saatchi wants to buy before the tide comes in!
'WORK IN PROGRESS' SCULPTURE BY SOPHIE CUSP JAKE PIVOT AND MATT DINERO

SALLY JOCKSTRAP

The Voice of Sport

SO THE Premiership has kicked off. I saw Man U at Epsom on Saturday and they were awesome.

With their new signing Tiger Woods in goal, this squad can go all the way in Sydney.

SPARE A thought for Frankie Dettori – left out of the British Lions.

If there's one man who can play table tennis, it's Sir Alex Ferguson.

No wonder we're no good at cricket. *(That's enough. Ed.)*

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo,

But a very short one this week because, hey, guess who's the writer in the family now?

Just as I was about to pen my thoughts to you from our holiday in distant Italy, Cherie walked in and I had a brilliant idea – which was to agree to her suggestion that she should write this week's message!

And why not? After all, we're a modern family. And if I help her by changing the nappies and holding little Leo whenever there are any photographers around, why shouldn't she do my job from time to time?

So, it's over to you Cherie! It's all yours!

Cherie Booth (the Vicar's wife) writes:

As you all know, I am an independent working woman in my own right. The fact that I have become a very successful lawyer has nothing whatever to do with the fact that I am married to the Vicar.

In fact, if anything, it is the other way around. I don't think I am giving away any secrets if I say that Tony has only got where he is today thanks to my support, advice and encouragement.

And, in view of the meagre size of a vicar's stipend, I can also tell you that if it wasn't for my contribution to the family budget, we would scarcely be able to come on our all expenses paid holiday to Italy!

That is why I am extremely angry at suggestions being made round the parish that I have used my position to "cash in" in my new legal practice.

Frankly, this is typical of the kind of sniping we have come to expect from a totally male-dominated culture, which in my own profession is so rampant that I sometimes think they are still living in the Middle Ages.

These same people have been saying behind my back that I have gone back to work far too soon after the birth of our son Leo.

But, frankly, in the modern world it is not my job to look after the baby night and day. I have more important things to do, which is why I expect Tony to play his full part.

And, I have to say, he has done a very good job, so far at least! And I hope that people in the parish will recognise this.

So, the next time they see Tony nodding off at a PCC meeting, or stumbling over his words in the pulpit, I hope they will make allowances. He has probably been up all night with Leo, so that I can get a good night's rest and go off to do a full day's work at the office to keep the show on the road!

And very soon I shall be even busier than usual, when the new human rights

legislation comes into effect, which will create a huge amount of extra work for us lawyers, who are already pretty over-burdened as it is!

But the last thing I want to do is to use the Vicar's newsletter to go on about my professional concerns! So, let me end by simply reminding any parishioner who wants legal advice on human rights or anything else for that matter, that I can be contacted at the vicarage at any time (except nights of course!) or at my new office in Matrix House in the High Street.

Good sueing!
Cherie Blair

Tony adds:

Great stuff, Cherie! I must let you write the newsletter more often! How refreshing for a change to have a woman's view on the big moral issues of our time. T.B.

ST ALBION'S COMPREHENSIVE

Mr Blunkett writes:

Yet again I must congratulate St Albion's pupils on their superb performance in scoring a record 102 percent of A Grades in our recent A Levels.
I am sure the Vicar's wife will be particularly pleased to know that for the first time the St Albion's girls did much better than the boys! I am sure there is a lesson for us all here, but I am not sure what it is! D.B.

Master Euan Blair

The Editor Writes:

I know the last thing the Vicar wants is for me to comment, but he has asked me to put on record his disapproval of the way people are continuing to comment about his young son, and in particular the so-called "incident" that never happened.

The Vicar says that he himself is "fair game" – so long of course that nothing detrimental is said. But his family are a "No-Go Area". And Cherie warns everyone that when the new European laws come into place, there will be a heavy price to pay by those who don't take these words to heart! A.C.

Millennium Tent Update

J-C Gerbil writes:

Mesdames, messieurs! Plus de bonnes nouvelles au sujet du Tent Millenniaire!

Nous avons agreed avec notre bon ami M. Nomura de Tokyo qu'il will "take the tent off our hands" ce automne pour une somme "très raisonable" (3p).

Il a beaucoup de bonnes idées pour fair le tente profitable, et je serais le first in the queue pour voir qu'est-ce qu'il a come up with! Le Hypermarché de Tesco, peut-être?

Au revoir,
Jean-Claude Gerbil

PS. Oubliez-pas – il y a encore beaucoup de tickets pour vous et votre famille. See vous there!

PPS. Aussi, pour un jour seulement, Le Grand Festival de Pokémon. Achetez les cards et download Le Mu!

"Un Jour Incroyable"

Tony's Little Blessing

The Vicar relaxes on his well-earned holiday in France. But rest assured – he's still holding the baby.

A Message From Mr Prescott

As you know, I have been left holding the fort as per usual, while the Vicar and his lady enjoy one of their well-earned holidays in that posh foreign palace provided by one of their rich Italian friends.

I am sure we all hope they have had a good rest, which Tony particularly needs after all the trouble he has had looking after the baby.

I am sure Tony wouldn't want me to say this, but I have to say that I absolutely agree with what young Master Hague was saying the other day about paedophiles – ie, that they should be taken out and shot. Well spoken, lad!

And if it's your idea of fun to sink 14 pints of ale of an evening, you'd be welcome at the Working Men's Club any time! J.P.

Advertisement

'HOW I WAS CURED OF MY ADDICTION TO HIGH-RISK SEXUAL SITUATIONS'

Says World-Famous Sexologist L. Ron Davies

"My life was a real mess. First I lost my job. Then my wife. And all because of my addiction to high-risk sexual encounters. Now, thanks to Sexology, I am totally cured. I have found the meaning to life and I would like my job in the Cabinet back, please."

L. Ron Davies

■ If you too would like to overcome an addictive obsession to walking about on Clapham Common looking for black men, write now to L. Ron Davies at the Church of Sexology, PO Box 94, Abergavenny AC1 DC2, enclosing huge cheque.

WORLD'S WORST-EVER PLAY STAGED
Audience walks out

by Our Man In Edinburgh **Nighttime McBooze**

THE highlight of this year's Edinburgh Festival is undoubtedly *The World's Worst Play,* **which has attracted the most damning notices since records were kept.**

On most nights, the entire audience has left after 10 minutes and the cast after 20.

Said one delighted playgoer, "It is a great privilege to have seen the world's worst-ever play. It is something to tell the grandchildren about in years to come, if I had any, but as I am gay, this is unlikely."

OTHER EDINBURGH HIGHLIGHTS

● **The World's Most Boring Poetry Reading** (Lord David Steel Memorial Hall)

● **The World's Longest Polish Film** (Walter Scott Bingo Hall, Prince's Street)

● **The World's Most Self-Important Gathering of Senior TV Executives** (Donald Dewar Conference Centre, Leith) *(That's enough Edinburgh highlights. Ed.)*

ROYAL BOX

Who Will Play Harry Potter? YOU DECIDE

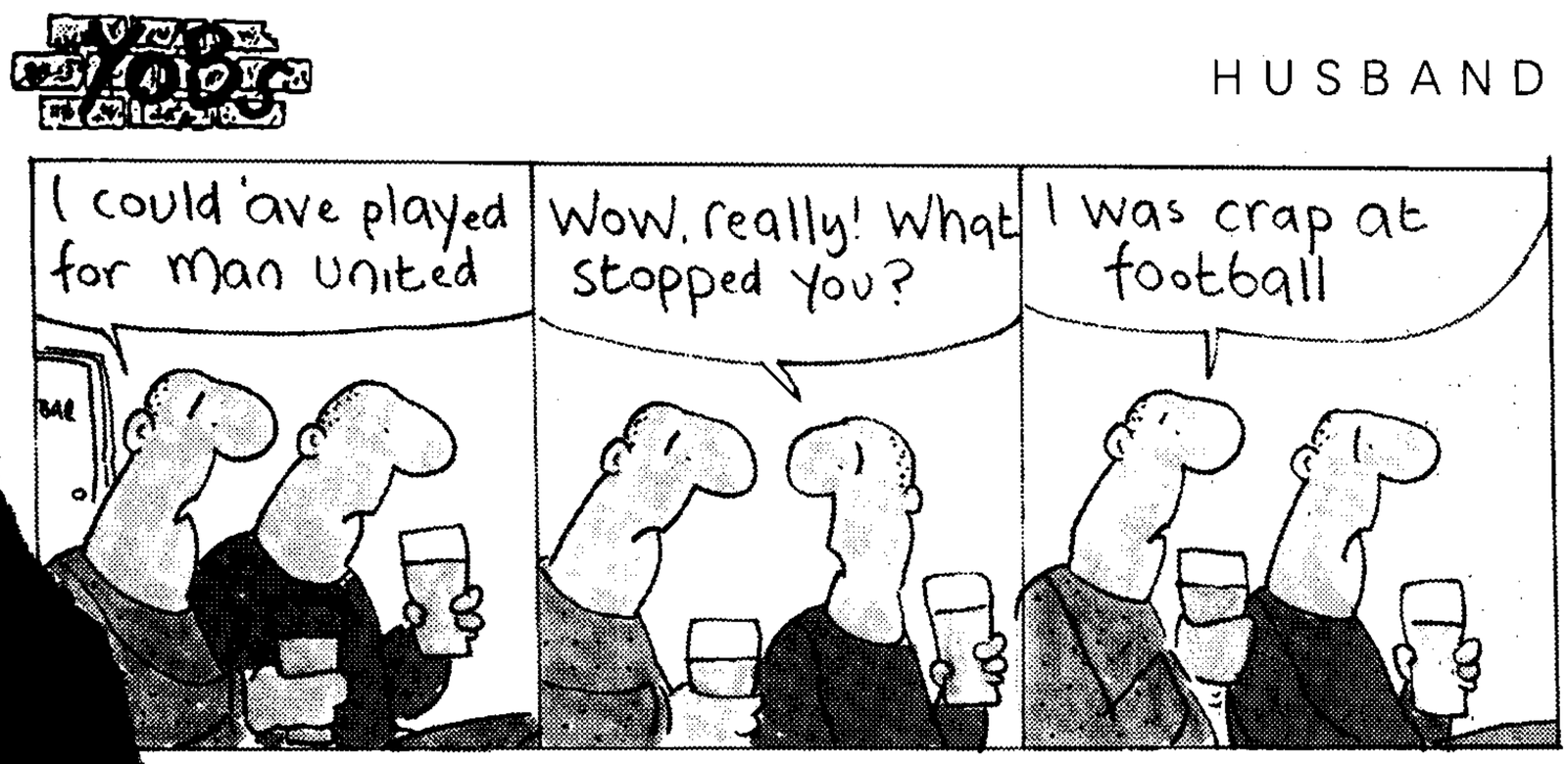
Will it be

	Jarvis Cocker
	Alan Rusbridger
	David Hockney
	Jacob Rees Mogg
	Janet Street Porter
	Lord Birt
	Harry "Toppo" Thompson

Phone the Harry Potter Hotline Now. Calls £90 a second.

FORMER JUDGE TO SUCCEED DAY

SIR Stephen Tumin *(opposite)* is expected to succeed the late Sir Robin Day as Chief Bore at the Garrick Club *(Reuters)*



Brontë
PORCELAIN
Queen Mother Candle Snuffer 4" £99
or deposit of £24 & 3 instalments of £25
Limited Edition of 1250
Brontë Porcelain Company of Worcester are a relatively young company who have specialised in producing collectable Candle Snuffers (or Extinguishers as they prefer them to be known)
Saga magazine

THE BEANO

BILLY THE KID

THE FUHRER & FIRKIN

FOURTEEN PINTS PLEASE!

WHIZZ!

GLUG-GLUG! GLUG!

THE JUG & NONGLE

SAME AGAIN, BARMAN!

WHIZZ! SPLUTTER!

THE THATCHER ARMS IS JUST TO THE RIGHT OF THE PINOCHET & PIANOWIRE

CHEERS! 32 RUM AND COKES — LINE 'EM UP!

WHIZZ!

LATER

NOW FOR SOME HIGH-SPEED POLICY-MAKING!

WHIZZ!

IT'S TIME YOU WENT ON THE WAGON, SON!

I AM — IT'S THE BAND-WAGON!

HIC!

LIFE SENTENCES FOR EVERYONE

ASYLUM SEEKERS GO HOME!

THE BASH STREET KIDS

YIPPEE! A-LEVEL RESULTS OUT TODAY!

STACKS OF ↓ A LEVELS

POOR OLD PLUG!

HE ONLY GOT SIX!

BOO-HOO!

BORIS THE BLACK

I'M GETTING ANOTHER JOB IN HENLEY, MR BLACK!

WON'T THAT INTERFERE WITH EDITING THE COMIC, BORIS?

NOT REALLY. I DON'T DO ANYTHING ANYWAY!

GRRR!

YIKES!

POLLY FILLER

YES, I'm back – but please, please, please don't ask me about my holiday. I just don't want to think about it. Oh alright then, if you insist.

Imagine Hell – only hotter – and you're beginning to get the picture of what constituted the Filler two week break in Gascony. While all you lucky people were bathing in cooling rain back in England, we poor wretches were subjected to a fortnight of so-called "glorious(!)" weather – with all that that entails: the toddler Charlie whingeing about heat rash, the useless Simon whining about sunburn, and the hopeless au-pair sulking indoors because she has to do the washing-up while we all swim in le pool.

It all started to go *poire*-shaped at the airline check-in. We were expecting delays, of course, but nothing prepared us for what happened. The wretched plane was *on time*. So, we presented ourselves at the check-in armed with luggage, jar of Marmite and inflatable whale a good five minutes before the "supposed" take-off, only to be told that the plane was taxiing on the runway and we should have been there two hours earlier. Since when did airlines start running on schedule? It was only thanks to my shouting and swearing at the drip of a girl weeping behind the check-in desk – and promising to name her in my next column (Alison Richards) – that I got the flight stopped at the end of the runway. Luckily, our fellow passengers sweltering in the plane while we boarded all seemed to agree with me about how unhelpful she'd been, muttering "selfish cow" as I struggled down the aisle.

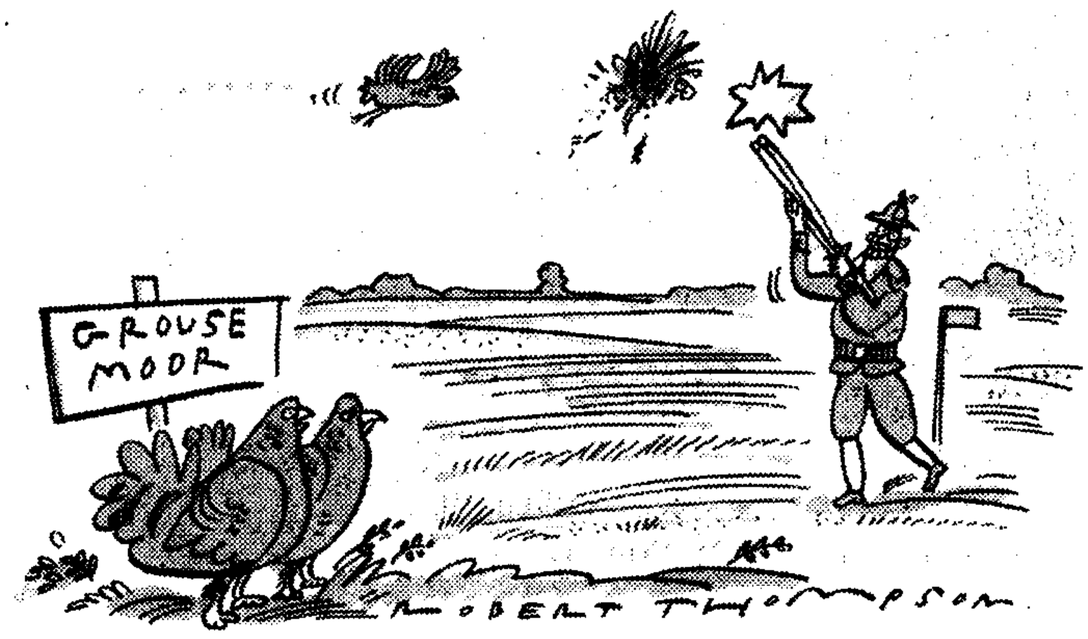
THINGS could only get better – but they didn't. Frankly, whoever put about the myth that the French are good at cooking deserves to be guillotined. Try taking an energetic three-year old to a restaurant where they've never heard of dinoburgers and spaghetti hoops! Charlie, of course, charmed the socks off our fellow diners by running round the restaurant doing his Thomas The Tank Engine impression and when he knocked over the display of regional wines the *garçon* just kept saying "ce n'est pas grave" as he swept up the broken glass. It may not have been "grave" to you, matey, but the resultant clattering about totally ruined my *pave de boeuf et bleu d'auvergne en sauce aux cêpes* from the £12.30 *menu gourmand* (I've had better).

The final straw came towards the end of the holiday. There I was, baking by the pool, trying to catch up on my reading and filling out my application for the Spectator editorship. Fat chance. No sooner had I got out my laptop than there appeared at the poolside *the* most enormous lizard I'd ever seen – a good 7, no 8cm long! Simon, of course, was typically useless, having gone off *avec* toddler to the local Hypermarché to search for Pokémon cards. (Mind you, if he *had* been there he would no doubt have been equally useless.)

So don't mention my holiday – it's a nightmare I'd rather forget. And *don't* get me started on the Germans we met at the airport on the way back!

Next week: the Germans we met at the airport on the way back.

© *Polly Filler*



"I say we ground the entire fleet — it isn't safe to fly"

Letters to the Editor

Brussels bureaucracy

SIR – Your readers may be interested to know that, on a recent visit to my village's admirable watering hole, the Lamb and Flag, which for more years than I care to remember has been a stalwart bastion of all that is best about the British way of life, I was horrified to find, on purchasing a small packet of Old Hislop's Traditional Four X Pork Scratchings, that the contents of the packet were stated on the label to be "113 grams".

When I enquired of mine host, the estimable N. Balon, what was the explanation for this alien form of measurement, he informed me that the manufacturers were obliged to label their products in grams by a diktat from the faceless bureaucrats of Brussels.

What, I asked, is happening to our traditional way of life, that these mindless little Hitlers can come over here and tell us that we are no longer to measure out our pork scratchings in pounds and ounces, as we have done for centuries past?

When our ancestors fought Napoleon on the battlefields of Waterloo and Agincourt, was it not precisely to prevent the foreigner from trampling on our ancient liberties, such as the right to drink a pint of good honest English ale and measure out our cricket pitches in rods, poles and chains?

Soon no doubt we will be told that it is a criminal offence for us to go down to the pub and ask for a "double Scotch", on the grounds that some Eurocrat has issued a directive making it compulsory to drink nothing but Dubonnet in litre mugs.

It is in preparation for just such an eventuality that, with the assistance of my good friend Col. "Buffy" Frobisher, we have taken the precaution of consuming as many "doubles" as is humanly possible before the dark day when Herr Goebbels and his EU thought police came in to march us both off to the death camps.

H. GUSSETT
Furlong Cottage
Half Crown Road
Bushel Green, Dorset

ROY of the FOULERS
GO EASY ON THE REFS THIS SEASON ROY...
vodafone
...THEY'RE NOT GOING TO STAND FOR ANY NONSENSE
THAT'S ALL RIGHT BOSS..
vodafone
COOPER
WE CAN JUST KICK EACH OTHER!
COME ON YOU RED MISTS!
KEEP YOUR HAIR OFF!

Your cut out 'n' keep guide to the cast of the fly-on-the-wall game show that has captured the imagination of the nation

BIG BROTHER IS NOT BEING WATCHED BY YOU

EVERY night for the past three years, millions of viewers have been tuning in to one of the most bizarre experiments in public entertainment ever devised.

An ill-assorted group of unsavoury characters are forced to live 24 hours a day locked away from reality in a special "sealed environment" known as The Government.

These unpleasant, self-centred show-offs compete with each other to win the approval of the viewers, who at regular intervals can vote to have them evicted from the show.

STILL IN

Still the dominant personality of the group but losing ground fast is public-school educated **Tony**, nicknamed "The Vicar" for his smarmy, self-righteous manner in trying to ingratiate himself with everybody

Tipped by the bookies as the "dark horse" who could last the course the longest is **Gordie**, the dour, uptight Scotsman who "keeps himself to himself" and sits in a corner going through his cheque-stubs.

Viewers are all agreed that easily the most unpleasant female member of the cast is bossy, twice-married **Margaret**, known as "the Baroness". No one is keener on chucking people out, but she must herself now be a front-runner as next to be evicted, since no one has a good word for her.

Very much the odd man out of the gang is bluff, working-class **John**, a former ship's steward who is the butt of everyone else's cruel humour for his speech impediment. Viewers have a soft spot for the only member of the cast who seems to live in the real world.

ALREADY OUT

First to be given the heave-ho was bossy, middle-class smarty-pants **Harriet**, who got up everyone's nose by constantly sounding off on topics she knew nothing about.

Next to get the boot for his shameless fantasising about dubious sexual escapades was Welsh-born **Ron**, the Clapham low-lifer whom no one was sorry to see the back of.

Third to get the thumbs-down was sharp-dressing man about Notting Hill **"Mandy"**, who was generally voted too clever by half. Amazingly, Mandy insisted that, despite getting the boot, he should be allowed back in, and Tony and the rest weakly agreed.

LATE NEWS • LATE NEWS • LATE NEWS • LATE NEWS

"Nasty Nick" Outed

In a surprise twist to the drama, viewers last night watched in astonishment as the show's cast finally woke up to the devious game being played by another character, the shadowy Nick Brown. Although he had presented himself to the others as nothing more than a nice, ineffectual gay who just wanted to get on with everyone, he was finally unmasked as a ruthless behind-the-scenes manipulator who for months has been secretly plotting to destroy British agriculture. *(Surely "be the last man left on the show"? Ed.)*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Sir Robin Day, political interviewer

So. Farewell then
Sir Robin Day.

Wih your bow-tie and
Spectacles
You interviewed all the
Great names of politics.

Harold Wilson. He was
One.
Margaret Thatcher. She was
Another.

"You, sir, the man in the back row
Wiith a red shirt."

That was your
Catchphrase.

"The lady with the
Yellow cardigan."

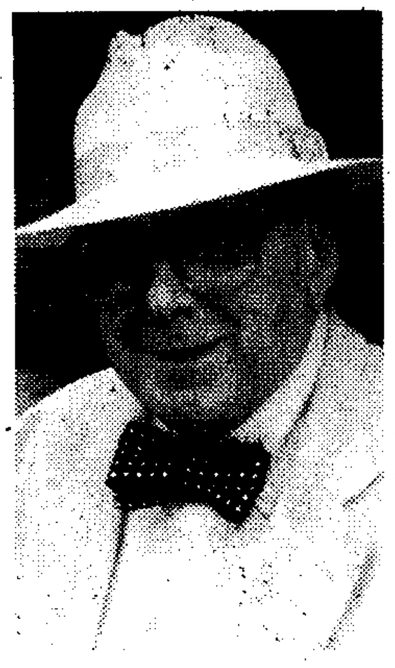
That was another.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

PS. The above poem should have appeared in the last issue, but unfortunately you died just after we had gone to press. E.J.T.

The Robin Day I Knew

by **Lord Rees-Mogadon**



I WAS very sorry to hear of the death of my old friend Sir Robin Day, the famous broadcaster

Over the years, I have worked out that we had lunch two million times. We first met at Oxford, when we often lunched together three or four times a day. In later years, we would share a lunch table at the Garrick most days and indeed nights. I cannot recall what we used to say to each other on those happy occasions, but I have nothing but the happiest memories of our many lunches over the decades. I will miss him deeply, particularly at lunchtime.

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That Liverpool Citation in Full

SALUTAMUS CILLAM NIGRAM, NATA CANDIDA, FAMOSAM PERSONALITATUM TELEVISIONIS PER MULTOS ANNOS. OLIM PUELLA IN LIVERPUDLIENSIS, ORNAMENTUM SCENA MERSEYENSIS IN DECADO SWINGENSIS LX ET STELLA CAVERNI CUM LEGENDARIUS FABULOSUS QUATTUOR, AUT MOPPI TOPPI, JOHANNES, PAULUS, GEORGIUS RINGOQUE. SED CELEBRATISSIMA PER POPULARISSIME SPECTACULO TELEVISIONE IN HISTORIA, VIDELICET "CAECUS DATUS" IN QUO TRES JUVENES INTERROGANTUR AB STUPIDE PUELLA QUI SELECTAT UNUM PER VACATIONE LIBRA IN BALIENSE AUT CLEETHORPIBUS. DICIMUS TIBI "LORRA LORRA" HONORES ET FELICITATES, CHUCKA SCOWSA!

APOLOGY

The Concorde Airliner

IN COMMON with all other newspapers, we recently stated that, despite the crash of a French Concorde, this aircraft was probably the safest form of transport ever known to man, in addition to being one of the greatest triumphs of modern technology and the flagship of Anglo-French supremacy in world aviation. We pointed out that in 30 years the Concorde had a unique 100 per cent safety record, and that the cause of the French crash was a unique, billion-to-one chance which could never happen again in a million years.

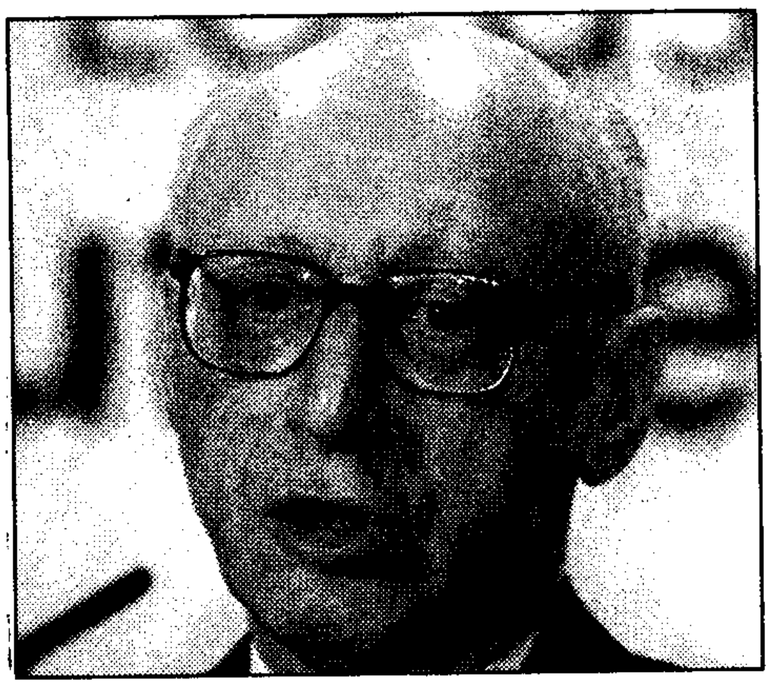
We now accept that there was not a jot or scintilla of truth in these fanciful allegations, which we dreamed up in five minutes after a behind-the-scenes briefing by the PR department of British Airways. We now recognise that any aeroplane which can blow up just because of a simple tyre-burst is undoubtedly the most dangerous machine that has ever flown, and that, far from being a triumph of state-of-the-art technology, it is a ludicrously wasteful, environmentally destructive, clapped-out relic of the Sixties which should long since have been consigned to the dustbin of history.

© All newspapers.

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

LONDON AL FRESCO
DOT·COM EATS
EAT IN OUT
FOOD
BISTRO 4
YOU
A RESTAURANT WITH VERY RUDE WAITERS
TUSCAN CUISINE
GAGGIN' FOR IT DOT COM
NASTY RUDE AD
ACE
AIR CONDITIONED
ROAR!
HI, I'M ON A DIET
CAN I TAKE YOUR ORDER AND GO AWAY AND FORGET YOU NOW?
WAITER, THERE'S A FLY IN MY SOUP!
I'M NOT THE BLEEDIN' WAITER! I'M MUGGIN' YOU!
I CAN'T BARE TO LOOK!
DAY MENU
MENU
HELLO COULD WE HAVE SOME SERVICE!?
SHIT!
RAP!
SOMETHING SHOCKING
I'LL KILL YOUR MOTHER...
RUBBISH
COULD YOU TURN THAT RACKET DOWN! PLEASE!
O! YOU #6! THERES A QUEUE!
GOT ANY SPARE CHANGE..
SPARE CHANGE? GOT ANY...
MENU
IT'S SO ROMANTIC, SITTING OUTSIDE, DARLING!
YOU SEE, I WAS ON MY WAY TO VICTORIA TO TAKE A TRAIN TO SEE MY SICK MOTHER BUT I'VE LOST MY WALLET. ALL I NEED IS £5... ETC.. ETC..
SHE DOESN'T KNOW IT, BUT HER BAG'S BEEN NICKED!
HEATH

DIARY



GERALD KAUFMAN'S SUMMER HOLIDAY

Monday: I am persuaded by an albeit rare outbreak of sun to honour the beach with a visit. But I first proceed to a shop the proprietor of which maintains a meagre display of sun-hats.

"Pray, sir, are you in possession of any headwear relevant to my needs, albeit of a type that does not bear either this or a slogan similar?" I ask, pointing to a hat bearing the elitist legend, "Kiss Me Quick".

"Sorry, mate," he replies.

"Please neither interrupt nor hector me, my dear sir," I riposte, in my usual measured tones. "If I have no wish to be kissed, quickly or otherwise, neither can I be persuaded to be heckled. Please assist informed democratic debate by answering my simple question – yes or no?"

"No."

"Yes or no?"

"No."

"Ah! Did you say yes?"

"No. I said no."

Touche! Through a combination of fastidious cross-examination and razor-sharp instinct, I have cornered the aforesaid gentleman into admitting that he has no appropriate sun-hats for the purchase thereof.

"In the circumstances, I am not prepared to continue our discussion," I say, turning on my heels in a manner reminiscent of Gene Kelly in his evergreen if over-rated "Singin' In The Rain". The gentleman is flabberghasted, little realising he has just taken on an opponent who, as the lynchpin of every major post-war Labour Government, has established himself as something of an expert at the art of debate.

Tuesday: Having traced a sun-hat, I venture down to the seashore. I am frankly appalled by the conditions that greet me. I make haste to summon a duty officer.

"This standard of flooring is wholly unacceptable," I complain.

"But it's sand," he whines. "People expect it on a beach."

"That is not the issue," I remonstrate. "The issue is whether they do not have a right to expect something of an altogether higher standard. You'll hear more of this."

"But the kiddies like to build castles with it," he whined.

"If you wish me to point a Building Standards Officer in your direction, so be it," I rejoin. "But I would have you know you are talking to someone who served upon the Royal Commission into the Construction Industry, 1969-73, so I am something of an expert in the field. And what, may I ask, is all that water doing there?"

"It's the sea!" he said.

"Please don't it's-the-sea me – this is a very serious matter," I correct him. "And it may well lead to a number of alarming consequences. That 'sea' could make a number of elderly or underprivileged persons intolerably damp. The issue at stake is the public's right to wear dry clothes, free from the fear of drowning. If it is cleared away by tomorrow at the latest, I will say no more about it."

Wednesday: In a scene reminiscent of Bette Davies in her classic "Now, Voyager," I proceed gracefully along the pier. In my morning perambulations, I like to devote between five and seven minutes to recalling a selection of words of wit and wisdom it has been my great good fortune to coin over the years. In 1979, Margaret Thatcher became, I regret to say, one of the unlucky recipients of one of my classic put-downs. "Will the Rt Hon Lady kindly tell the House," I said, "why one so fastidious in her personal appearance seems so keen to make such a thorough mess of the country unfortunate enough to have her as Prime Minister?!!!!!" Frankly, her career never quite recovered, and just ten short years later she was out of a job. Then in 1983, I described Willie Whitelaw as "a very large man in an equally large suit". Need I add that it brought the House down?!

Halfway through this trip down memory lane, I am interrupted by a coarse brigand. " 'Ere, clear off my private property, you frog-faced slap-headed git!" he shouts. I have never been so insulted in my life. I inform him of my firm intention to report his ill manners to the duty officer at the local police station.

Thursday: I pay a visit to a Magic Show in the theatre at the end of the pier. This is not, I should add, my usual fayre. As one who has recently taken in both Sophocles' Electra at the Donmar Warehouse and Wagner's Ring Cycle at the Coliseum, not to mention a delightful trip to Stratford as the personal guest of the artistic director, I have no need to boast of my commitment to high culture.

The conjuror, who seems a very pleasant individual, asks me to pick a card, any card, not to tell anyone what it is, and to place it back in the pack. This act I duly perform. He then makes an extravagant albeit ostentacious display of shuffling before throwing all the cards in the air before stabbing a single card with a dagger. "And what was the name of your card, sir?" he says, as a drum rolls.

"I am not prepared at this juncture to reveal that information," I reply.

"*Please* tell me the name of your card, sir," he asks.

"You are referring to information I solemnly agreed hitherto should remain confidential," I reply.

The act peters out without, so far as one can see, any recognisable "magic" forthcoming.

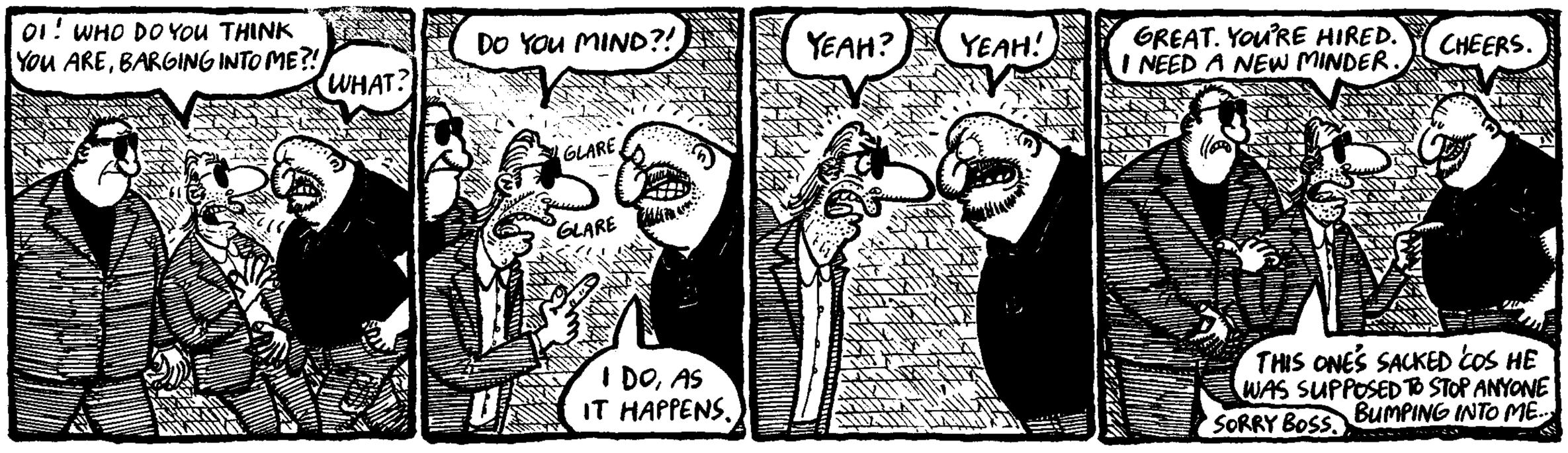
"You didn't want to do it like that," I tell the conjuror as he slouches off. Of course, I am something of an expert in the field of family entertainment, having personally founded the British Satire Movement in the early 1960s.

Friday: Pursuant to Esther Williams' cherishable albeit flawed performance in the classic Bathing Beauty (1944), I decide to dip my little toe in the sea. Like much modern opera – of which, I freely admit, I am something of an expert – I find it not altogether to my taste. Staring aghast at all the other bodies on the beach, I cannot turn a blind eye to their aura of social exclusivity and unabashed elitism, with their air of "getting on well", "sun-bathing" and their conspicuous consumption of highly expensive "ice-creams". Memo to Tony from something of an expert in these matters: It is time to abolish the beach as an elitist meeting-place of sunworshippers and seabathers. Thus expunged, it will become a much more civilised environment for those who are able better to appreciate it, such as my own good self.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER



Literary Review

Tome from home

Stet
Diana Athill
(*Granta*, £12.99)

NO disrespect to Diana Athill's elegant and occasionally mordant memoir to say that it is a memento from a vanished age: as out-of-date in its way as a bowler hat or a jar of hundreds and thousands.

Miss Athill (the kind of woman, you imagine, who would prefer not to be addressed as "Ms"), now well launched into her ninth decade, was for nearly half a century a London publisher's editor, mostly under the inspired, monomaniacal and cheese-paring direction of the late Andre Deutsch. *Stet* — a technical term from publishing, meaning "ignore, or cancel, the correction", ie "leave as stated", is her account of this highly distinguished career.

As such, and despite Miss Athill's agreeable wit and disinclination to gloze over old disagreements, it is a rather familiar book. The publishing memoir is a time-honoured ornament of English publishing, of course: the boardroom spat over whether to publish Barbara Bedworthy's *It's Nicer Lying Down*; how *x* went off in a huff to *y* and what *z* said about it at the Groucho. The whole thing comes around as regularly as Lord Bragg's voice on the radio.

Miss Athill was luckier than most in that she worked with some top-grade writers, among them Jean Rhys, Molly Keane, Brian Moore and V.S. Naipaul. Even better, she is no respecter of reputations, and the intrigued student of Paul Theroux's memorably chippy *In Sir Vidia's Shadow* may care to check out her portrait of the young-to-middle-aged Naipaul (at the point where V.S. looks as if he's going off to another publisher, his editor realises gratefully that she no longer has to deal with "the exhausting and finally tedious task of listening to his woes".)

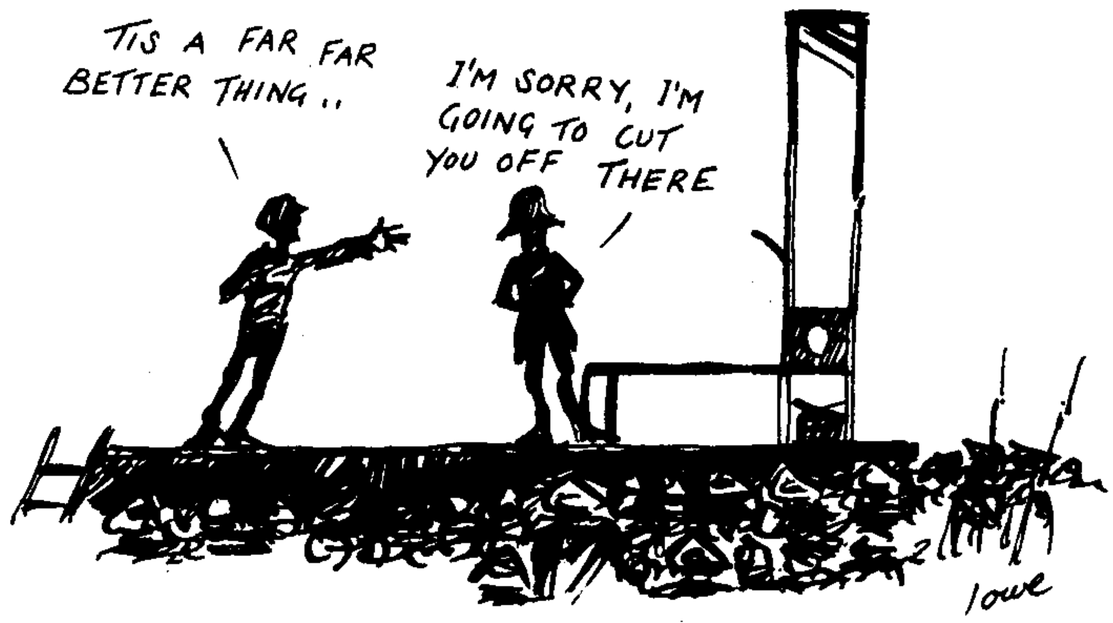
And then — the clincher, perhaps — there is the tone: the familiar, comforting but ultimately unsatisfactory tone that oozes out of so many memoirs of twentieth-century upper-bourgeois liberal life — high-minded, progressive, tolerant, right-on by all the approved contemporary yardsticks (Attlee's 1945 general election victory is the defining moment here, *natch*) fastidious and faintly superior. There are some shrewd remarks about the Booker Prize, founded, as Miss Athill rightly points out, on the assumption that if you made a book "news" by throwing a substantial sum of money at it then *hoi polloi* (the author's phrase) might just take an interest.

Though Athill tries fairly hard to rein in the note of elegy — she claims to find herself "not greatly distressed by the way publishing is changing" — *stet* is essentially the latest in a long line of contributions to what might be called the myth of English publishing. Built up over the years by books like Jeremy Lewis's *Kindred Spirits* (1995) and the pronouncements of gentleman publishers such as Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson, the myth of English publishing goes something like this: the book trade used to be a lot of fun, a world full of vivid and arresting personalities where clever chaps and girls could bring out really good stuff and somehow get by; but then the wicked accountants moved in, along with the big money, and isn't it a *shame* about what happened to Secker & Warburg, Victor Gollancz or indeed Athill's own Andre Deutsch Ltd, which now survives on the ghost-written autobiographies of Manchester United footballers?

Now, there is something to be said for this line — after all, the wicked accountants did for Transworld's Anchor imprint only last month — but not a great deal. No doubt in an ideal world publishers would sit around in their Bloomsbury offices exclaiming over promising first novels and sorting out the spring poetry list. Unhappily the world — the readership, the cultural climate, the economy — has moved on. Though she realises this, Athill, just as much as Jeremy Lewis before her, is completely unreconstructed about it and almost takes a pride in revealing that she was "bored by the thought of money" and "useless" as a businesswoman.

This, however much you may sympathise, was one of the great delusions of old-style gentleman-and womanly publishing, the pleasant thought that if you put the stuff out then, miraculously, someone somewhere would buy it. As for the vivid and arresting personalities one came across, well, Andre Deutsch was a top-notch talent spotter who published Mailer, Roth, Updike and a whole lot more, but having read what Miss Athill has to say about him I think I'd have preferred somewhere minus the titanic ego and plus decent salaries and a proper pension scheme.

Early on in the book Athill tries to vocalise Andre's irritation at the tradesmen who pressed him to pay his bills: "These idiotic printers and binders are trying to prevent me from publishing truly essential books which the world needs and which will end by making enough to pay them all and to spare." It is the authentic publishing memoir complaint. Rupert Murdoch, Eddie Bell, "chick-fic", megabucks — all this, it turns out, was quite inevitable.



Books & Bookmen

WHAT A PATHETIC WAY TO EARN A LIVING Pt94...

■ WHEN an aristocratic French painter and an American poet opened an art gallery-cum-Greek café in the Dordogne last August they placed an ad in the *International Herald Tribune* in the hope of attracting tourists.

Instead, the owners of the KaΦe Art Gallery, Armelle de Porcaro and Anne Mulvaney, received a lawyer's letter from UK-based art publisher, the Phaidon Press, complaining of the use of the Greek letter *phi*, or "Φ", in their name.

Phaidon's solicitors have demanded written confirmation that the café owners will cease using the letter immediately, leaving De Porcaro, who studied fine art in Greece and speaks the language, and Mulvaney at a complete loss as to how their little gallery café in a tiny village in La France Profonde could possibly be confused with Phaidon, described by its lawyers as "the most important art publisher in the United Kingdom".

■ SPECULATION that Tim "Dan Dare" Waterstone is set to mount another takeover bid for his old company, backed by the Prudential, has been dismissed by Waterstone's MD David "Mekon" Kneale as "simply someone, I know not whom, trying to cause a bit of mischief".

In fact the Mekon is being mischievous himself: he knows perfectly well it is Dan Dare himself who is leaking to the press with such abandon. A shrewd media operator, Waterstone knows that City editors are all too grateful for a good story involving a major business name during the silly season.

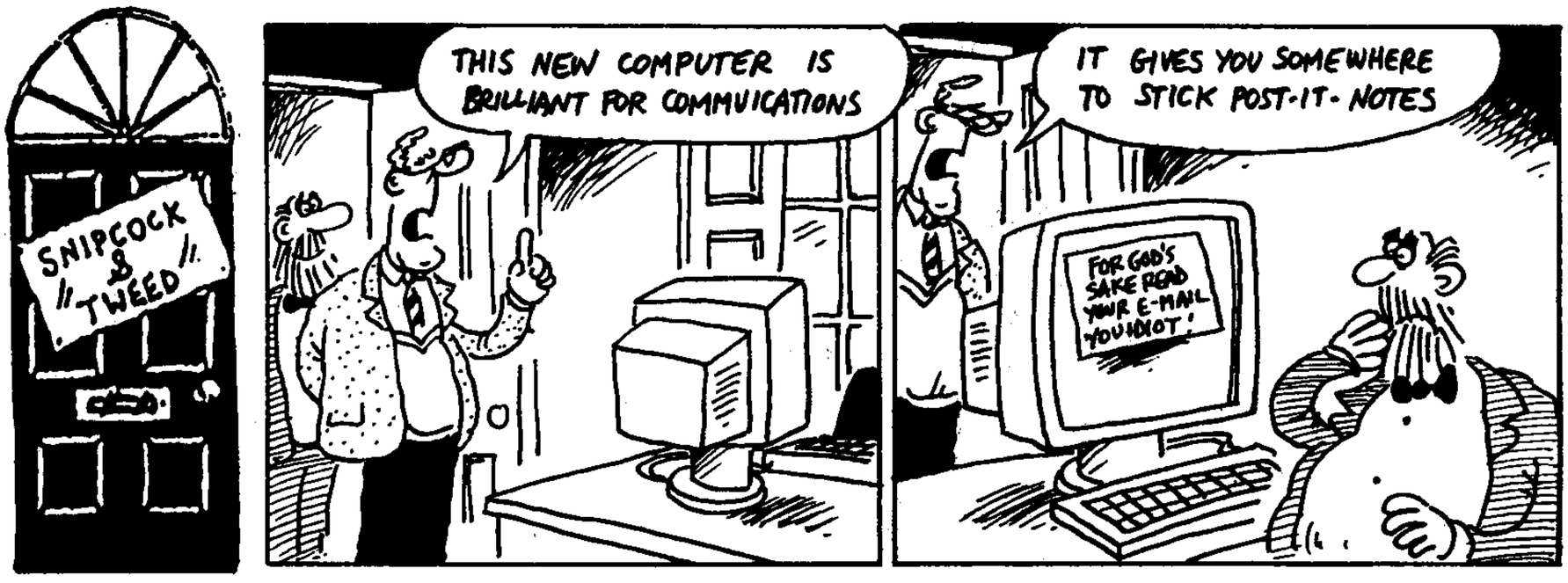
However, Kneale's protests that the company is not for sale also ring slightly hollow. Although Waterstone's is not officially on the market, HMV Media's main backers — EMI and the US venture capitalist Advent — want to cash in but have long been informed that their coveted flotation will never happen with the book chain on board.

As neither the Prudential nor any other venture capitalist is likely to value the under-performing company at the £300m HMV wants for it, Tim is likely to win the media battle but lose the fight to regain control of the company to a conglomerate with large cash reserves. Bertelsmann pulled out of the race in the spring, but it seems likely it is now merely playing the waiting game.

■ NOT SO long ago, the *Bookseller* carried no bylines at all. Now all but the shortest item is signed. But why did the dateline on the story about a Publishers Association initiative against the piracy of books in India in last week's *Bookseller* say "India: Danuta Kean"?

The piece very closely resembled a press release issued by the PA, which resides in, er, Kingsway — no more than a brisk 10-minute walk from the *Bookseller*'s Bloomsbury eyrie. Did Kean, the news editrice of that august journal, really jet to the subcontinent to collect a PR handout?

'Bookworm'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THIS NEW COMPUTER IS BRILLIANT FOR COMMUICATIONS
IT GIVES YOU SOMEWHERE TO STICK POST-IT- NOTES
FOR GOD'S SAKE READ YOUR E-MAIL YOU IDIOT!

IN THE BACK

WRITE-WASH!

AN original draft of Sir David Ramsbotham's glowing report on Blantyre House, the country's most successful resettlement jail, has conveniently found its way to the *Eye*.

The subtle changes to the text forced by the prison service on Rambo (see *Eyes passim*) will make interesting reading for the home affairs select committee. It is holding an inquiry into May's botched raid on the jail and the hasty removal of governor Eoin McLellan-Murray and his deputy David Newport.

The published report has been cleansed of all references to the area manager for Kent, Tom Murtagh.

Rambo originally highlighted Murtagh's opposition to the rehabilitation regime being operated by Mr McLellan-Murray and the tensions it caused. Three specific references to the "area manager", including how he did not share in the praise being heaped upon the jail, by everyone including prison service director general Martin Narey, were erased. Instead the opposition and tensions were attributed to "other parts of the prison service".

But Rambo was right to highlight the difficulties between Murtagh and those running Blantyre. For Murtagh was the driving force behind the unprecedented and costly raid by up to 100 prison officers, some in riot gear. He had told Narey that there was intelligence suggesting serious criminal activity at the jail. As the *Eye* has already reported, the raid netted evidence of only a minuscule amount of cannabis use and pornography — far less than would have been found in any other jail — and Kent police confirmed shortly after the raid that they were not involved in any criminal investigations at the jail.

That the select committee has specifically put "investigations by Kent police into alleged criminal activities by prisoners" into its terms of reference suggests it wants to examine the trigger for the raid as well as its impact.

And of course Tom Murtagh is the direct line manager of the so-called Chaucer team which is still trawling through the jail in an attempt to uncover evidence that might justify past events there.

Meanwhile it seems there has been some hasty backtracking by the new regime installed at Blantyre. The new governor Chris Bartlett, who had immediately cancelled the jail's charity day and put a stop to vital work placements for inmates, has been trying the mend bridges with the local community, upset at the clampdown at the jail and the treatment of McLellan-Murray.

In a letter to Chris Mackie, of Sunburst Commodity Trading, who lost thousands of pounds when three staff he employed from the jail were forbidden to turn up for work, Bartlett admits he was wrong.

After reviewing the decision, which he says he took "in the interests of public safety", he is asking Sunburst restart prisoner placements "to assist their successful re-integration into society".

Despite his treatment Mackie is willing to help, although he is disbelieving of the "public safety" argument. He says he learnt that one of his former employees was later sent out to another firm. "It seems to me that the closer you worked with McLellan-Murray, the more you were punished."

The Earl of March amid his lush pastures

GOODWOOD, BAD WOOD

THE titled gents who run Goodwood Estates in Sussex (the Duke of Richmond and his son the Earl of March) clung grimly to their dignity after the revelations in *Eye* 1006 that they were ripping off the taxpayer by several tens of thousands of pounds in bogus grants for environmentally sensitive areas.

A few choice words from Goodwood's press officer, former local TV reporter Rob Widdows, dismissed the breaches as a technicality and the duke, the earl and their estates managers assumed that was the end of the matter. But now the same mole who reported their lordships to the ministry of agriculture has struck again, this time with a letter to the Forestry Commission.

The commission confirmed to the *Eye* that it has had a letter from Goodwood complaining about the estate's claims for woodland grant. The Goodwood estate, says the letter, "is failing to comply with agreements with yourselves." Two examples follow. First, in an area called Reservoir Clump, a pheasant pen has been set up to expand the estate's lucrative game shoots. The pen has resulted, according to the letter, in "extensive damage to the plantation's trees". Second, in a wooded area called Limetrees, which qualifies for woodland grant, "extensive amounts of rotting straw" from the previous year's Goodwood Festival of Speed have been dumped, killing off trees and leading to a "very heavy infestation of rats".

The Forestry Commission, which shells out £17m a year in subsidies to landowners for the safe keeping of their woods, says it is investigating the alleged breaches. "We take very seriously any suggestion that the conditions for our grants are not being met," said a spokeswoman.

While the commission investigates, another related problem dogs the Goodwood estate. Its owners are very proud of its certificate from the Soil Association licensing Charlton farm as organic. A Goodwood leaflet boasts: "Our lush grassland is untouched by artificial grassland or sprays." *Whoops!* On 5 July Nigel Draffan, Goodwood estates land agent and director, wrote to Alex Brown, tenant farmer at Manor Farm which grows crops in which pheasants are reared for shoots.

Wrote Draffan: "Following the inadvertent application of non-organic chemicals on the two game plots within the Charlton Farm boundaries I wish to confirm that no herbicides or fungicides are permitted and only approved organic fertilisers can be applied to the game crops... I am sorry that such restrictions must apply but if we do not insist on this prohibition we could lose our organic status which would have serious financial consequences."

It is not clear whether the Duke of Richmond knew of these two "inadvertent applications". He was delighted by a memo to him on 17 June announcing that the first organic lamb had been produced at Charlton. "Splendid news!" he scrawled in reply. "How soon can we supply the [Goodwood] hotel?" Certainly not until the Soil Association investigates the claim that its rules for organic farms are being broken.

Leeds Uninvited

"*WOODHEAD Backs Hague Proposals for Education*" was the headline in a recent issue of *Local Government First* above an article which confirmed the close relationship between the Tory party and the chief inspector of schools, Chris Woodhead.

Top of the agenda for both is the removal of state education from the control of elected authorities and the handing over of schools to private companies and big accountancy firms.

This strategy has been pursued remorselessly by Ofsted and its chief inspector in inner London areas like Islington and Southwark (see *Eye* 1002). Its national success depends on the weakening of local authority influence in the big Labour councils in the north.

The councils in Sheffield and Hull were obvious targets, but then education secretary David Blunkett is a Sheffield MP and Hull is too closely associated with another senior minister whose feathers Woodhead does not want to ruffle: John Prescott. A much more likely target is Leeds, which has no cabinet ministers and very few Labour MPs with any guts or independence.

Ofsted descended on the city, where its inspectors concentrated less on the performance of Leeds schools than on the council. The unelected inspectors (Douglas Thorburn, Daryl Agnew, Christine Brown, Terry Holland, David Singleton and Barry Wilcox) concluded that Leeds primary schools were better than average, and Leeds secondary schools slightly worse.

This not very startling discovery led to a dramatic conclusion. "Given the sheer volume, depth and range of the authority's failings, this inspection team has limited confidence in the local education authority's capacity to respond fully to the government's agenda within an acceptable timescale." Almost at once provisional test results for Leeds primary schools were published. They showed that the children have just had their most successful year ever.

Nevertheless Mr Thorburn and his team had spoken in terms that pleased their chief inspector, and something drastic had to be done. In other words, expensive "consultants" had to be hired at huge cost to Leeds ratepayers and taxpayers. The lucky firm on this occasion was the biggest accountancy conglomerate in the country, PricewaterhouseCoopers.

At a cost of some £200,000, the experts from PricewaterhouseCoopers, none of whom is elected, concluded mainly by means of arbitrary and subjective "marks" awarded to different forms of education management, that the elected authority was incapable of running Leeds schools and that the schools therefore should be handed over as soon as possible to a "venture company".

The new company should be composed of two elected councillors, two unelected nominees of a private education firm not yet named and a chairman nominated by the secretary of state for education. Quite why such a unique, untested body could run Leeds schools better than an authority elected by the people of Leeds was not explained.

The government, however, was tremendously impressed. Education minister Estelle Morris announced that the new venture company would be set up at once.

Leeds MPs -- all Labour, all elected -- were not so impressed. In a Commons debate on 18 July George Mudie (Leeds East) described Chris Woodhead as "increasingly eccentric" and denounced the Ofsted report as "grotesque". Paul Truswell (Pudsey) likened Woodhead to a "grave robber" with "his own political agenda". As for the PwC report, Harold Best (Leeds, North West) said it had "no street credibility in Leeds whatever".

The only sustained praise for the chief inspector came, naturally enough, from the Tory spokesman John Bercow, MP for Buckingham. He said he had supported Chris Woodhead "since I came out of short trousers". He concluded: "The chief inspector is an outstanding one and he deserves a better government under which to work." He meant that a Tory chief inspector should really be working under a Tory government.

THAT'LL TEACH THEM...

THE case of Anna-Marie Davies, the severely disabled child at the centre of a Swansea special school's controversial "do-not resuscitate" policy, has taken another bizarre and cruel twist over what therapy she needs.

Eye readers will recall that Anna-Marie's grandparents withdrew her from the Ysgol Crug Glas school after whistle-blowing nurse Bunny Pinnington (*Eye* 1000) alerted them to the school's shocking decision to deny the child life-saving resuscitation.

Mrs Pinnington was rewarded with the sack and is now taking Swansea council's education authority to court under new whistle-blowing legislation. The family has been vainly demanding a public inquiry into the affair. In the meantime Anna-Marie, who suffers from a rare degenerative brain condition, has been classified as too ill to return to school and has been receiving education and physiotherapy at home.

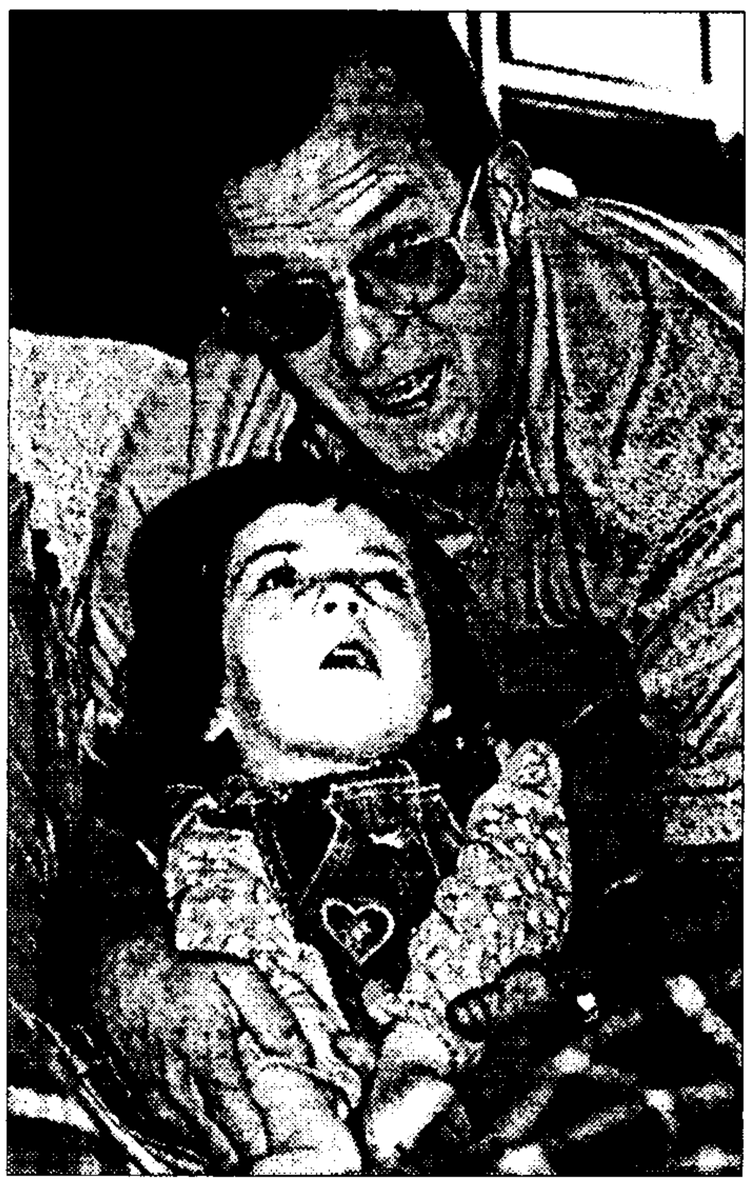
Her grandparents had wanted Anna-Marie to continue with hydrotherapy sessions from which they said she benefited enormously. It provided crucial stimulation and increased her tiny appetite. But they were told it had been decided that hydrotherapy was of no benefit to Anna and the treatment was denied.

In a series of exchanges between the Davies family and their lawyers, the local authority and the local NHS trust say physiotherapists were not recommending hydrotherapy for Anna-Marie and they would therefore not include it in her care plan. Er... except that Anna-Marie's physiotherapists had invited her to a three-week course of hydrotherapy during the school holidays, which has now ended. So how can Anna be "in need" of hydrotherapy one minute and not the next?

It was a question the *Eye* put to David Williams, chief executive of the Swansea NHS trust. He said: "We think hydrotherapy is of marginal benefit, but if the family believe it helps, we are anxious to support them in any way we can. If Anna-Marie has just had three weeks hydrotherapy, I see no reason why it cannot continue, subject to her state of health at the time and the availability of the pool."

This was staggering but welcome news to Mr and Mrs Davies, who only last month received a letter from Mr Williams saying that current advice is that Anna should only receive home-based physiotherapy. And even as Mr Williams was assuring the *Eye* the treatment would be available next week, if it could be arranged, another letter arrived from Mrs Sharon Davies, on Swansea city and county authority notepaper. It said that the education authority had concluded that the evidence from the physiotherapy department was clear that Anna-Marie should receive only dry-land therapy. It was written on 10 August when Anna was concluding her hydrotherapy sessions arranged by the very physiotherapists who were said to oppose it.

This all gives weight to grandfather Brian Davies' belief — that the decision to deny Anna hydro-therapy is to "get at us for making a fuss about the non-resuscitation order".



Anna-Marie Davies with her grandfather

The gymslip jailbirds

THERE was uproar last week at a judge's decision to send a 15-year-old girl who had never been in any kind of trouble before into Styal women's prison in Cheshire.

The girl had been only 14 when, with several other youngsters she was playing with matches and cardboard in a wheelie bin and the fire got out of control, setting light to a family day centre.

Even though Judge Adrian Smith accepted the arson was not deliberate, he said only a custodial sentence would send the right message to other youngsters. Everyone else, including the Children's Society, the victim and the owners of the day centre believed locking up a child with young women offenders was the worst thing that could be done. Reparation, education and community penalties were a far more effective solution than exposing a vulnerable teenager to bullying, drugs and the risk of self-harm.

But the fate of the 15 year old from Greater Manchester is not unique. Despite pledges going back a decade from politicians of both parties to end the practice of sending young teenage girls to prison, on any one day there are likely to be up to 30 or more 15 and 16 year olds in ghastly places like Holloway and Styal — and a significant number will be first offenders.

Even though home secretary Jack Straw repeated the pledge to parliament in March last year, it seems his punitive penal justice policies are seeing more rather than fewer girls ending up in custody, despite a fall in crime among young women.

Last month the Howard League protested to Straw about the use of custody for Romany girls as young as 13 — some of them traumatised asylum seekers and two of them pregnant — for a first offence of theft. Although most had been sent to secure units, older 15 year olds had gone to Holloway.

They, like many of the other teenagers in jail, had been subjected to Straw's new detention and training orders for young offenders, which mean that they must serve half their sentence in custody and half in the community. This single approach for all crime and criminals means that young people who would not normally have been sent into custody end up behind bars in inhuman conditions and in contravention of our UN obligations to children.

High Principals

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGED

THE strange state of affairs at Middlesex University, lovingly chronicled over many months by Whistleblower of the Times Higher Educational Supplement, has come to a head over the arbitrary and unfair dismissal of Judith Abrahams, an experienced and popular secretary who worked at the university for 25 years.

The north London tribunal to whom she took her case found that she had been made redundant "for personal reasons" and has some harsh words for Brian Hipkin, the dean who sacked her. Mr Hipkin, the tribunal held, had kept his job as chief investigator with one purpose only: "in order to ensure that Mrs Abrahams was dismissed". Moreover, the dismissal was not for business reasons but purely to suit the convenience of senior staff; and the university had blatantly flouted its own procedures. The tribunal concluded: "We take a very serious view of the fact that an essential safeguard of employee's rights appears to have been completely overlooked."

Nor was the tribunal impressed by the role of Sir Michael Partridge, former permanent secretary at the department of social security, who chairs the governors at Middlesex. Sir Michael conducted Mrs Abrahams's appeal to the governors by contacting two of his colleagues and conducting the "hearing" by phone. This was described as "not good practice".

The tribunal's decision was greeted with disdain and horror by the university's vice chancellor, Michael Driscoll, one of the most rapidly-promoted executives in higher education. Prof Driscoll circulated his testy response to students' affairs managers throughout the campus. "Some comments," he whined, "are offensive, particularly those which suggest that staff acted either unprofessionally or from personal motives."

The letter has been copied and sent back to the tribunal, with the impertinent suggestion that it might constitute contempt of court. More worrying still for the authorities is the fear that the real reasons for Mrs Abrahams's dismissal — her persistent questions about accounting and other administrative practices in relation to overseas students — might be taken into consideration by Paul Greaves of the higher education funding council. At the request of higher education minister Baroness Blackstone and the national audit office (NAO), Mr Greaves is conducting a detailed inquiry into the university.

BRIGHTON SPARKS

THE University of Sussex, which has one of the most beautiful campuses in Britain (more than 100 hectares of chalk downland, woodland and meadows in an area of natural beauty), has awarded its grounds maintenance contract to a private company under no obligation to uphold the current environmental policy, especially with regard to the use of pesticides.

Despite its green name, French company Ecovert South Ltd, a subsidiary of the huge Bouygues construction group, has made headlines recently over damage done to the local environment. Ecovert holds the contract for all council services in Brighton and Hove, where its recent acts include spraying a grass verge in a residential area with toxic chemicals and allowing subcontractors to destroy part of a rare breeding ground for skylarks.

Ecovert, which has won contracts to maintain new developments at King's College and Barnet General Hospital in London, won the Sussex contract as part of a best value exercise, the brainchild of building and services manager Tony Middleton.

Middleton brought in a firm of consultants, Alan King Associates, to draw up a list of selection criteria to put the work done by an in-house team out to tender. A report by Unison argues that the specification prepared by Alan King Associates "gives scant regard to the university's own 'environmental policy' and 'pesticides policy and code of practice'." Unison fears that the ground staff, who will be employed by Ecovert from 1 November, will be forced to ignore the current policy which states that chemical pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilisers must be kept to a minimum if used at all. It also fears staff will be urged instead to use chemicals to avoid costly labour intensive work, thus threatening the wildlife on an environmentally sensitive site.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THERE are few takeover bids that get away without somebody somewhere being tipped off – and the £5bn Barclays decision to be with the Woolwich appears no exception.

Those with knowledge of the activities of insider dealing's usual suspects suggest that the word was discreetly out almost two weeks prior to Barclays announcing its 350p a share agreed bid.

Agreed bids are always more leaky simply because double the number of insiders and advisers have to be in the know than is the case with a hostile offer.

That being so, it is perhaps not surprising that the Woolwich share price should have begun a slow and steady climb from 245p, close to its low for the year, on 31 July. Over the next two days the price moved ahead to 257p on large turnover. From around four million shares the turnover jumped to almost nine million and then 14 million.

The suggestion from inside at least one small broking firm with a big private client business – most of the usual suspects are in this category – was that the word was "fill yer boots". Which is indeed what seems to have happened.

A week later the Woolwich price was up to 269p just ahead of the bid announcement on 9 August which saw the Woolwich share price rocket to 341p on a turnover of 63 million shares. The suspicion is that fear of a leak resulted in premature announcement of the agreed deal. The formal announcement came two days later.

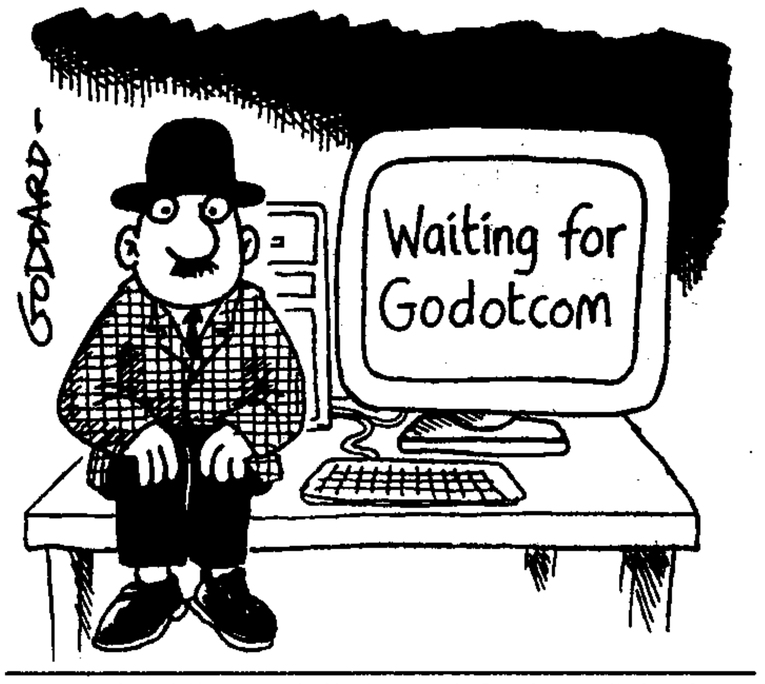
The great advantage of a share like Woolwich is that you can deal in size without attracting suspicion or alerting the Stock Exchange surveillance system. So anyone who loaded up in the first week of August was many quids in. Indeed almost £1 a share. Which means that those lucky buyers helped share in a quick total profit of more than £12m from the minimum 15 million shares alone acquired the week before the bid. And that ignores those who piled in at the last minute – which could double that figure.

But proving who they were never mind tracing the leak is another thing again.

NO SUCH lack of proof surrounds the investigation into the share-tipping and dealing of the *Mirror*'s City Slickers Anil Bhoyrul and James Hipwell.

The only question here is whether and when the Department of Timidity & Inaction will have the will to prosecute, if not for insider dealing then for a financial services act offence such as market manipulation. There was frenzied speculation earlier this month that the two Slickers were about to have their collars felt. So much so that one of their broking contacts quickly reversed himself and returned abroad days after returning from his holiday. He is still away.

The DTI is believed to have completed its inquiries and to have the evidence to proceed against Bhoyrul and Hipwell. The position regarding their close pal and avid follower, "*Moron*" editor Piers Morgan, is less clear. Proving that he knowingly traded on inside information could be tough. Proving that he used advance knowledge of what was to be tipped in his own paper could rely on somewhat ambiguous taped calls to his sacked broker Antony Laiker or the testimony of his former tipster pals who



are admitted liars and likely co-defendants. It is also uncertain whether any arrest will be necessary unless the DTI wants to make a point. Usually such matters are dealt with by summons.

In any event it would seem that the countdown has begun for their day in court. The only questions are likely to arise around the actual charges and the extent to which others may be involved – not just *Mirror* executives but the brokers who acted for the Slickers and those who gave them their tips and may not only have dealt themselves but have also rewarded the Slickers.

WOULD-BE press baron Mohamed Fayed has had to pump almost £11m into *Punch* magazine in return for financing its continuing losses.

The latest figures to August 1999 show that the phoney pharaoh's mouthpiece made an operating loss of £1.7m up from £1.5m for the previous 30-week period on sales of just £321,000 against an equivalent annual rate of £350,000.

Fayed was forced to inject the £11m following the 1998 transfer of *Punch* and his other Liberty media interests from Harrods Holdings to a separate Jersey company controlled by himself alone rather than his brothers also sharing the losses. The transfer required the repayment of the near £10m borrowings previously provided by the family company.

The *Punch* experience has now run up losses of more than £11m which Fayed has had to finance from his own offshore pocket.

Elsewhere in the Harrods empire Fayed continues to dip into HSBC's pocket. The most recent Harrods accounts reveal that the HSBC overdraft facility had been utilised to the extent of £144m by end-January compared with £127m a year before. This at a time when Fayed's bankers are squeezing his group loan facility down from £340m to £293m in preparation for its repayment or refinancing in 2002.

The bankers may be somewhat concerned at the fact that the Knightsbridge store is showing negligible growth – sales up just £2m at £427m – at a time when so much needs to be repaid.

ATTEMPTS by former bankrupt and experienced helper of the police with their inquiries Graham Avery to bring Titaghur back to the stock market (*Eye* 987) seem to be hitting further hurdles.

Information from India suggests that no sale of land assets there – the jute mills are all leased, anyway – will be allowed because of debts owed to creditors such as government taxes as well as local employees. Any money from land sales has to be invested in the local company or is taken by the West Bengal government under recent legislation. This is in somewhat stark contrast to the picture painted in the 1999 Titaghur accounts circulated in March.

Indeed it is suggested that the debts to the workers' pension fund resulted in Avery's temporary arrest by the Indian authorities when he visited last year. He was held in civil prison for a number of days in May 1999. Avery was only released after promises were made about payment which have yet to be met.

Indian shareholders are said to be pressing the DTI for an official investigation into Titaghur's affairs on the basis that misleading information is being provided by the company.

Avery was made bankrupt in 1991 and since he was evicted from WB Industries has been involved pre-Titaghur with two companies which went bust. International Telecom Industries was wound up in 1996 by Customs & Excise. Greenwich Metal was wound up by a creditor in 1998.

All of which is likely to make any Titaghur stock market comeback somewhat questionable.

THE internet has given a whole new lease of life to those justifiably permanently on the fringes of the financial world. Now the world is truly their oyster. Quick to realise the web's potential was Jerome Schneider who made his living in the 80s peddling brass plate banks in tiny Caribbean and Pacific tax havens.

Schneider is currently promoting online privacy with books such as *Hiding Your Money* and *How to Own Your Own Private International Bank*. These are marketed through his own website.

What Schneider does not mention in his books is how his banks were used in numerous scams. So much so that his customers and their banks became the target of inquiries by the FBI and Scotland Yard, especially after he monopolised the market for fraudulent banks from the tiny islands of Montserrat and Grenada. Schneider denied he was responsible for his customers but his activities resulted in changes in legislation curbing brass plate banks.

This was not Schneider's first run in with the law. In 1973 he was jailed for stealing telephone equipment. In 1980 he was fined for false claims made by his company WFI.

Not surprisingly Schneider, who operates from Vancouver, has gone off Montserrat: "One of the worst international money havens." He prefers Vanuatu, Nauru and the Cook Islands in the Pacific, plus Richard Branson's favourite Caribbean bolt hole, the British Virgin Islands. All blacklisted by those fighting money laundering.

'Slicker'

Stock Horror

Somerfield — 'Piling off the pounds'

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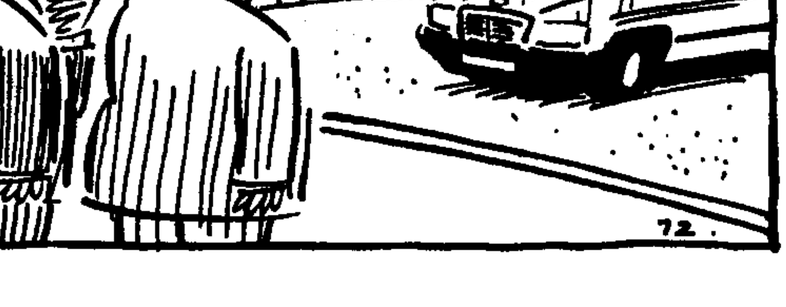

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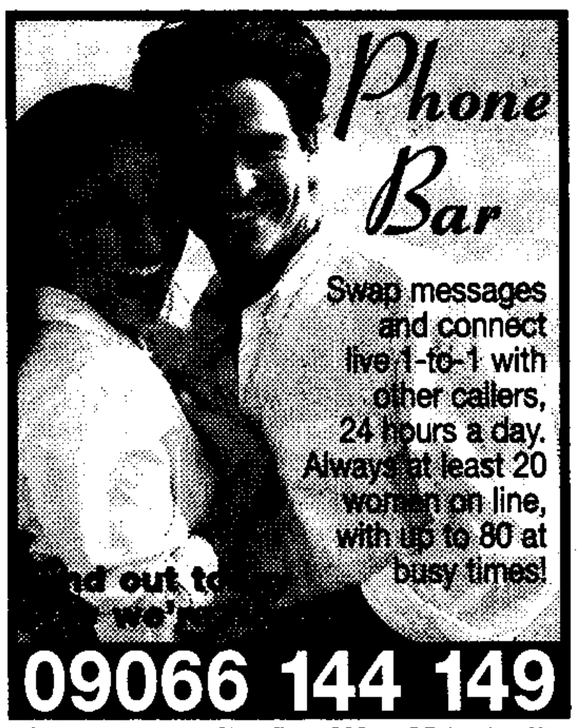
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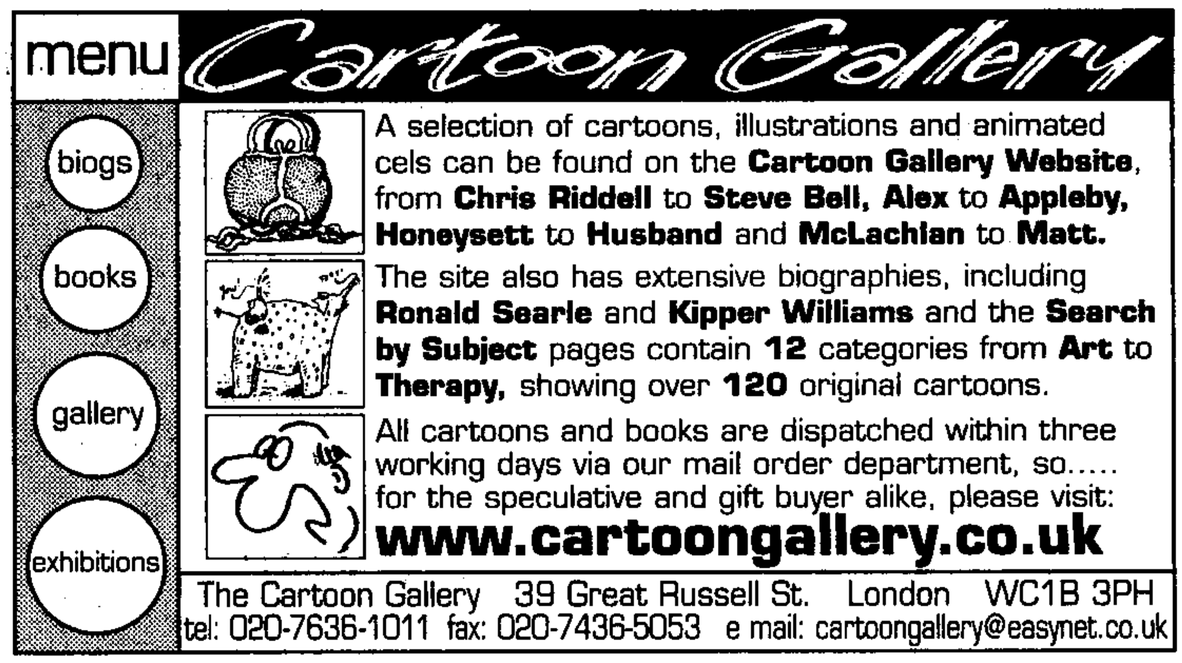
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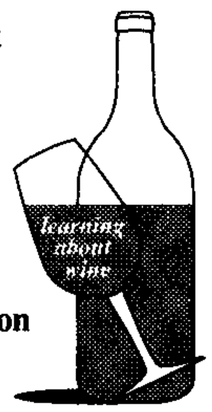

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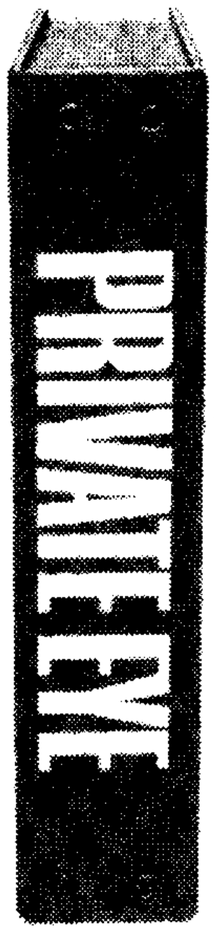

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INTELLIGENT, creative handsome tall, dark, sensitive – seeks fun loving English belle. Box 0109.

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ARE YOU A WOMAN 23-29 looking for a relationship? I am 30-year-old company dictator based in the midlands who is looking for a meaningful relationship. If you have a restless nature and like to go a bit mad, send your details to Box 1808 or email woman@streetmonkey.co.uk

LIVELY, PROFESSIONAL woman in 40s, daughter aged 5, seeks considerate, intelligent man to add sparkle to 2000. Hertfordshire/London. Box 2409.

MALE, CONSIDERED attractive, young looking 48, medium build, reasonably fit – has challenging and interesting career – in happy but alas physically unfulfilling marriage. Seeks interesting and fun lady as friend, confidante and discreet lover. London + SE. Box 1809.

Replying to a PRIVATE EYE SMALLS Box Number? Address your reply like this:

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Communications Team
Exmouth House
3-11 Pine Street
LONDON EC1R 0JH

MALE – WELL TRAVELLED in life, now in 40s, 6'2", N/S, no ties, clean, smart, fit, healthy, very discreet – W.L.T.M. an attractive female who might perhaps want – as myself – to settle in her ways. Presently living in central London. Photo please. Box 3409.

MISERABLE OLD GIT (40-something, currently solvent) seeks gorgeous, vivacious, bright, funny female for highly amusing secret-squirrel adventures in and around London. Free carriage-clock for the first ten applicants. Box 2909.

NON AGEIST fit, well-heeled, semi-detached professional, 52, seeks part or full time mistress for discreet fun. London/Anywhere. Reply with phone number. Box 2009.

DEMANDING FEMALE sought by willing compliant male, 40s, tall presentable, with both the time and enthusiasm to meet her demands. Box 1609.

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seeks long-term, intimate
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with a wonderful, feminine,
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beautiful lingerie, fine stockings,
high heels
and the burning desire for a
very attentive, considerate
younger lover.
Photo? London/SE
damandblast@hotmail.com
Box 1709.

GRADUATE, greater Manchester based, available. Slim, financially secure – seeks similar female (35-52) initially fun, friendship – perchance soulmate, confidante. Box 1009.

HAPPY MAN
(50, tall, lecturer)
seeks happy girl (any age)
for shallow fun and frolics.
Midlands.
Box 2209.

TALL, DARK, fun loving professional male, 28, seeks attractive, professional female, 20-45, with good figure and sense of fun to share discreet sexy fun and frolics. Box 1109.

MASTERFUL, HANDSOME romantic male, 41, entrepreneur, desires younger svelte, intelligent erotically unassertive traditional feminine, female partner interested in exploring deeper instincts. 07050 398943.

TALL, SLIM,
HANDSOME,
professional guy,
early 40s,
eclectic tastes, likes outdoors,
travel, movies, books etc.
seeking bright,
pref younger female
for relationship.
You?
33RPM@talk21.com
or Box 1908.

TALL, BRIGHT, attractive, willowy woman, drowning in married men, seeks urgent rescue by equally warm and delicious London-based man, late 30s/40s, possessing leakproof liferaft to paddle her off to nirvana. Photo please. Box 3909.

AUTUMN SOON – long walks, pub lunch, siesta? G and T, dinner, log fire – interested? If you are a slim, attractive lady please send letter/photo to this fit 57 y/o man now. Box 1509.

ATTRACTIVE, VIVACIOUS, slim, independent blonde mature woman seeks sophisticated grown-up assured man of substance for theatre, opera, etc. London. Box 0609.

TALL, SLIM, professional male, 38. One should always be in love. Discuss. Sheffield, unfortunately – theman@uk2net or Box 1209.

LET'S HAVE FUN! Attractive, attached male (50) nonsmoker, bored – seeks erotic adventure with interesting mature female. Absolute discretion. Greater Manchester/anywhere? Box 3809.

TALL, strict, successful, assertive man Bristol/South West, 42, seeks a naughty younger woman to share the golden Autumn with. I love eating out and eating in, nights on the town and weekends in the country, laughter – and the rich tapestry of life. If you would like a fun relationship with some spice then please write to me with your telephone number to Box 1409.

ARIES MAN, late 40s, loosely attached, North Cheshire based – WLTM similar woman for sharing discreet erotic adventures. Box 2109.

STRONG WILLED and confident exotic female (Saintpaulia) 32, seeks cultured gentleman of the world, 45-55 to pamper and adore her. Photo and phone number would be helpful. London. Box 1309.

ATTACHED 39 YEAR OLD male architect seeks attractive lady to share love, lust and laughter. Box 3109.

FIT, FUNNY, BRIGHT, generous guy, 41, constrained in passion-less marriage, seeks woman with mind and body both worth exploring – to unleash passions on. London. Box 0209.

WELL-HEELED, generous guy, 41, seeks high heeled girl for discreet liaisons. Photo. London. Box 0409.

SLIM, FIT, professional guy, 40s (attached) cool exterior, but warm hearted, seeks hot lady for sizzling times. Yorks. Box 0809.

ATTRACTIVE, CREATIVE man, 40-ish, seeks attractive, creative, single mother 30-ish, London area. Box 0709.

HOUSE TRAINED guy – stockbroker – cheerful, cultured, caring, fit and fifty – seeks slim, professional female for fun times in South Wales. Box 3709.

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